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ABSTRACT

The first two papers in this volume discusses the results of questionnaires intended for primary and secondary teachers to elicit information on current issues in the teaching of English in Australia. It was learned that secondary teachers reached consensus only on the very broadest levels. They all agreed that literature, communication, and expression should not be treated as separate studies; that reading and literature continue to be relevant; that the curricula must consider individual differences; and that some provision should be made for informal discussion in the classroom. Division of opinion occurred in discussing how goals were to be achieved and priorities ordered. Primary teachers gave wide support to the preeminence of oral language, creative writing, and teacher autonomy. On other issues, however, there were differences of opinion. The second paper examines current curricula and teaching practices in the Australian states (Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, and South Australia) and is organized under the following headings for each state: introduction, aims and objectives, structure and orientation of courses, current approaches and materials, current methods of assessment, and summary. (HOD)

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Current Issues in the Teaching of English: Report on a Questionnaire Study

English Curricula in Australia

These papers were prepared at the
Australian Council for Educational Research and
appeared as appendixes in the report of
the Australian UNESCO Seminar on
The Teaching of English, Sydney, 1972

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Questionnaires on Current Issues in the Teaching of English

The questionnaires on which this report is based were prepared at ACER under the direction of a small sub-committee consisting of Miss D. Davis, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University; Mr G. Tickwell, Co-ordinator of Swinburne Community School; and Mr W. Renehan, Chief Research Officer, ACER. The report, which is a revision of that submitted in draft form to the seminar, has been prepared by Mr W. Renehan, with the assistance of Mrs C. Ryan (née Vaughan). In the draft report the statements of the questionnaire and the response percentages to each were presented as an attachment. In this revision they have been included in the body of the report. Furthermore, in the original draft attachment, the percentages given were totals, summed unweighted across states. The difficult problem of estimating appropriate weights has been avoided here by presenting percentages for each state separately.

Because it was necessary to place limitations on allocation of staff and funds for data processing, a more detailed analysis than the one described in this report has not been possible. However ACER welcomes enquiries from research workers and is prepared to provide access to the data and to further use of the questionnaire.

A small number of the items in the secondary questionnaire are derived from a questionnaire used in earlier studies in the United States and in Britain. For a report on this study see J. R. Squire and R. K. Applebee, *A Study of the Teaching of English in Selected British Secondary Schools*, University of Illinois, Illinois, 1968.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CURRENT ISSUES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

This questionnaire includes a number of statements about the teaching of English. You are asked to indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of them in accordance with the following scale:

Strongly agree	a ( )
Agree	b ( )
Uncertain	c ( )
Disagree	d ( )
Strongly disagree	e ( )

Although this scale incorporates a neutral category for items about which you feel quite uncertain, we ask you to use this as little as possible. Work quickly through the items indicating the appropriate measure of either agreement or disagreement. In making your responses, try to ignore the limitations peculiar to your particular teaching situation.

Name of School .....

Type of School — Please tick ( ) the appropriate bracket
Government ( )
Independent ( )

Sex of respondent: ( ) F ( ) M

Please tick ( ) the number of years you have been teaching

a ( ) less than 1 year
b ( ) 1 - 5
c ( ) 6 - 10
d ( ) 11 - 15
e ( ) 16 - 20
f ( ) more than 20 years

Current Issues in English Teaching in the Primary School

Please tick the appropriate column that most accurately reflects your attitude concerning the following issues.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
1. Most of the time, children work better in a quiet classroom.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
2. An open area is essential in the primary school.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
3. Because language is seen as pervading the work in other subject areas, no special time slots should be given to a subject called English.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
4. The study of selected pieces of writing followed by discussion will give children an appreciation of good writing.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
5. A teacher can teach English effectively even if his own written English is not always accurate.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
6. A teacher should provide regular classwork on common errors of usage.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
7. There should be no specified length of time each week for the teaching of English.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
8. Language development is fostered more readily in mixed ability than in streamed groups.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
9. Later in the primary school streaming is advisable for the teaching of reading skills to children of widely differing abilities.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
10. Regular spelling exercises contribute little to the development of the child's language ability.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
11. The child beginning school should be encouraged to write imaginatively even though he may not have achieved any great skill in spelling and handwriting.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )
12. The most important task of the primary school teacher is to teach the essentials of English and mathematics in preparation for the secondary school.	a ( )	b ( )	c ( )	d ( )	e ( )

13. Children cannot be expected to write creatively unless they are first taught the fundamental skills of writing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
14. Children will become good readers if they are given comprehension tests on material they have read. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
15. A comprehensive library is necessary to support effective English teaching. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
16. Words used in the teaching of reading should be those from the child's own oral vocabulary. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
17. Memorising at least a few poems each year helps children appreciate poetry. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
18. Teachers of all primary grades should read stories to the class regularly. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
19. Children will become better writers if they are encouraged to concentrate on creative or imaginative writing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
20. Dictation exercises are of doubtful value. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
21. A teacher should encourage children to read a few good quality books rather than large quantities of other literature. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
22. A primary teacher should have definite expectations of standards in each grade. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
23. A teacher needs some knowledge of the ways children acquire language in order to teach English effectively. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
24. Children will explore and extend the resources of their language much more effectively in talking than in writing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
25. Children will become better writers if all their written work is given a mark. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
26. The study of words and their meanings will enrich the child's writing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
27. The primary teacher should give a special emphasis to poetry in the curriculum. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
28. Because of television, speaking and listening will gain precedence over reading and writing within the next few years. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
29. Homework should not be given to primary children. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
30. Children should be encouraged to develop the ability to speak to the whole class. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
31. A teacher must first ascertain a child's weaknesses and design his teaching to compensate for them. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
32. A teacher must test his pupils frequently to determine the effectiveness of his own teaching. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

33. The silent classroom has no place in the primary school today. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
34. Creativity is more important in the primary school than grammatical competence. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
35. The teacher should teach the vocabulary specific to a passage before the children read it. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
36. A child learns more about the use of English in the playground than in the classroom. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
37. A teacher should not attempt to mark all errors of usage in children's written work. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
38. A teacher should try to ensure that each child interacts easily and valuably with other members of the class. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
39. A teacher needs to attend organised seminars in order to keep abreast of current educational trends. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
40. At least one period in each day should be devoted solely to instruction in English. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
41. A primary teacher should be free to plan his own courses guided chiefly by his own professional knowledge. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
42. English can be taught effectively even where library resources are poor. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
43. If children are taught to plan their ideas in essay writing they will become better writers. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
44. Grammatical correctness should not be neglected even in creative work. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
45. Children must learn to read words before they can read sentences. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
46. Teachers should be as concerned with listening comprehension as they are with reading comprehension. a ( ) ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
47. The only justifiable approach to primary education is a curriculum based on the child's experience. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
48. A teacher should always plan his day in detail. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
49. The chief concern of the school will always be to teach children to read and write. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
50. A teacher should not bother too much about correct spelling and punctuation in the creative work of his pupils. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
51. The teaching of basic grammatical terms is necessary in the primary school. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
52. A teacher's approach to classroom organisation should always be free and spontaneous. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

53. A teacher should not expect every child to be able to speak to the whole class. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

54. The aim of drama work is that children should be able to present simple plays to an audience. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

55. Children will become better writers if they concentrate on 'practical' writing tasks e.g. letters, writing paragraphs, etc. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

56. Drama and mime can be taught effectively without the special provision of an open space area. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

57. Because 'every lesson is an English lesson' there is no need to allocate time specifically to English. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

58. A teacher should encourage children to read in great quantities, irrespective of the type of reading material. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

59. Formal assessment of some written work is essential in primary schools. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

60. Children will most readily acquire the fundamental skills of writing by being allowed to write creatively. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

61. The teaching of formal grammar cannot be justified in the primary school. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

62. Children should be encouraged to prepare or finish work at home. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

63. The primary teacher needs a definite syllabus designed by curriculum specialists. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

64. Children have not been given a comprehensive education in English until they have come to appreciate English literature. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

65. The school library should be accessible to children at all times. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

66. Children should not be allowed to leave work unfinished. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

67. Spoken English should have a pre-eminent place in primary education. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CURRENT ISSUES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

This questionnaire includes a number of statements about the teaching of English. You are asked to indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of them in accordance with the following scale:

Strongly agree	a ( )
Agree	b ( )
Uncertain	c ( )
Disagree	d ( )
Strongly disagree	e ( )

Although this scale incorporates a neutral category for items about which you feel quite uncertain, we ask you to use this as little as possible. Work quickly through the items indicating the appropriate measure of either agreement or disagreement. In making your responses, try to ignore the limitations peculiar to your particular teaching situation

Name of School .....

Type of School

Please tick ( ) the appropriate bracket Government ( )
Independent ( )

Sex of respondent: ( ) F ( ) M

Please tick ( ) the number of years you have taught English.

a ( ) less than 1 year
b ( ) 1 - 5
c ( ) 6 - 10
d ( ) 11 - 15
e ( ) 16 - 20
f ( ) more than 20

Current Issues in English Teaching

Please tick the appropriate column that most accurately reflects your attitude concerning the following issues.

Strongly agree	a ( )
Agree	b ( )
Uncertain	c ( )
Disagree	d ( )
Strongly disagree	e ( )

1. The study of literature should always be the central purpose of the English syllabus. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
2. Frequent exposure to many examples of good writing accompanied by some writing practice, will do more to improve student writing than will constant practice with in-frequent exposure to good stylistic models. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
3. Diversity of linguistic backgrounds of secondary school students demands a syllabus which provides for differing rates of progress. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
4. The study of literature is the concern of the English teacher. Television and film study can only be peripheral to that. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
5. Time spent on teaching grammar is largely wasted. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

6. In correcting written work, it is unfair to students not to mark out all errors in every piece of work submitted. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
7. Study of the media is one of the principal areas of language study. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
8. Less able students should be taught English in mixed ability groups rather than in streamed or graded groups. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
9. Part of the English teacher's role is to help students to evaluate the techniques of advertising and of the mass media. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
10. Once a student begins a writing task, it should usually be up to him to decide how long it should be and whether or not he will complete it. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
11. Drilling and formal instruction are not necessary for the learning of spelling. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
12. In general, written work should be discussed and planned beforehand in class. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
13. The teacher of English should be wary of exploring with the child such questions as fear, sex, love and guilt. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
14. The team teaching approach in English tends to encourage a disjointed approach. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
15. Correctness in speech and writing is an unimportant and arbitrary social category. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
16. Even when teaching very able children the teacher should avoid being too concerned about direct preparation for later academic studies. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
17. Insufficient time is devoted in most classes to listening skills and aural comprehension. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
18. The essence of English is a sensitive approach to life and literature and this is not amenable to testing by formal examination. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
19. Unlike other subjects in the traditional curriculum, English has no content of its own. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
20. The teacher's main role is that of providing experiences rather than formally instructing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
21. Some time should be devoted in English lessons to correcting ungrammatical usage and improving poor pronunciation. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )
22. Conversation and informal discussion are learning activities for which provision should be made in the normal English program. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

23. The most important writing is the poetic or imaginative use of language which permits the student to explore his own feelings and thoughts. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

24. English cannot be wholly incorporated in an integrated area of study but should be preserved as a separate area in its own right. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

25. The development of skill in speech does not mean attention to accent or vernacular, but ensuring that pupils can express their ideas with fluency and clarity. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

26. Children will never learn to write coherently and fluently if their only experience is creative writing and free expression. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

27. The various elements of the English syllabus — literature, communication, expression, are best taught as separate courses. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

28. It is the English teacher who must assume final responsibility for the way students write, even in other specialist subjects. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

29. It is necessary to study words and their meanings if the range of pupils' writing is to be extended and enriched. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

30. The nature of language, its acquisition and development is a specialised study which is of little help to the teacher of English. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

31. Children should be permitted to write frequently and freely without insistence on technical correctness in all written work. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

32. Because modern media have transported us into a new age of oracy, speaking and listening should gain precedence over reading and writing in classrooms within the next few years. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

33. For most children, the emphasis in the classroom should be placed on practical writing: for example, letters, reports, plans. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

34. It is unnecessary to make any assessment based on material read during wide reading periods. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

35. A major aim of English is to introduce children to the great literature of the English language and (in translation) to the literature of the world. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

36. The way pupils speak is in reality beyond the influence of the school. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

37. Literature should not be regarded as a separate study from expression and communication skills. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

38. Major academic qualifications in English (e.g. three years University study of English) should be a pre-requisite for anyone teaching the subject in schools. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

39. When studying literature, close textual examination is essential. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

40. There is little need for the teacher of English to share his personal response to literature with his classes. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

41. Of all aspects of language, speaking has the most significant contribution to make towards the development of language proficiency. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

42. One of the functions of drama in the junior secondary school is for the child to develop awareness of the audience's needs as well as attempting to satisfy his own. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

43. Instruction in correct usage is essential if pupils are to communicate effectively. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

44. There is little need for a teacher to be interested in his students as people. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

45. The chief concern of the English program is to enable the child to use his developing resources of language to explore his personal experiences. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

46. A major aim of English must be to help the student develop language as a technique for interacting with other people. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

47. Group work, rather than individual work, is the more effective way to develop language competence. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

48. There is little value in close textual analysis of literature, in schools. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

49. Discussing questions of usage is almost impossible if students have no knowledge of the terminology and rules of grammar. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

50. There should be a remedial reading program with specially trained teachers in every school. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

51. Pupils must be given freedom to choose some literature, even if such freedom means that they often choose inferior works at certain stages of their development. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

52. Teaching of formal grammar is essential, if children are to learn to use language proficiently. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

53. If a choice had to be made at the junior secondary level, scripted drama (either published or written by the students) is more valuable than free drama, e.g. movement, miming, improvisation. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

54. In his classroom, the English teacher cannot avoid being concerned with questions of values and ethics. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

55. Children will learn English more efficiently in a streamed class than in an unstreamed one. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

56. Every teacher of English should be actively involved in creative activity (e.g. writing a novel, acting, film making). a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

57. Some grammar should be taught as an integral part of any English program in the secondary school. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

58. A teacher should not attempt to mark all errors of usage on students' written work. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

59. Ideally, slow learners should be taught English in a separate class. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

60. Those aspects of English—punctuation, spelling, grammatical usage—which are usually tested in schools, form an inappropriate content which has been spuriously attached to English. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

61. Teachers should ensure that clear guidelines are given to students regarding the length of most assigned written work. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

62. Recourse to grammatical rules and terminology is of little assistance when questions of usage are being discussed. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

63. Spelling cannot be learnt incidentally, therefore it must be taught systematically. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

64. Since correctness in speech and writing are valued socially, it is necessary that teachers should be concerned with correct speech and writing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

65. A specialist knowledge in stage-craft is not necessary for the teaching of drama in the secondary school. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

66. Children learn language only by using it. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

67. Speaking and listening should concern the teacher of English more than reading and writing. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

68. A student should be encouraged to read only that literature which he can understand and appreciate at a given stage in his development. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

69. Formal exercises on vocabulary are unnecessary. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

70. In order to teach English effectively, a teacher needs to have a sound knowledge of the nature of language, its acquisition and development. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

71. In school, the most effective means to literacy is through creative work and free expression. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

72. In English, emphasis should be placed on contemporary literature rather than on literature of the past. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

73. Literature is best taught as a study separate from expression and communication skills. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

74. Child drama in the junior secondary school is largely concerned with the experience of the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

75. In student writing, the emphasis should be on effective communication rather than on correct usage. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

76. Reading and the study of literature continues to be relevant to the pupil in the 1970s. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

77. It is more important to study the literature of your own country rather than that of others. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

78. Strong emphasis must be placed on study methods and skills of reading for comprehension if pupils are to take their place in a sophisticated, technological society. a ( ) b ( ) c ( ) d ( ) e ( )

Current Issues in the Teaching of English — Report on the Questionnaire Study

PREPARATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires were intended in one case for primary and in the other for secondary teachers. Early drafts of the secondary questionnaire were tried out with a sample of 120 secondary teachers who had acted as CSSE essay markers in Melbourne or Sydney. The primary questionnaire was tried out on 70 teachers at five Melbourne schools.

The secondary questionnaire is concerned with whether English ought to be regarded as a separate subject and, if it is, whether literature in particular ought to be treated separately. It also asks questions about the content to be included under this heading. Other questions look at the importance of and the kind of talking—and of course writing—to be encouraged in classrooms; or at what kind of drama and for what purposes. Teachers are asked what should be done about children's usage, about the teaching of skills, about the place of grammar, and about how the language is in fact learnt. Other issues considered are the knowledge he brings to his task, the kind of classroom organisation in which he works, and the way he tackles evaluation and assessment.

The issues with which the primary questionnaire is concerned are the position of the teacher, the degree of his autonomy in relation to the curriculum, the kind of background knowledge he required, and how he perceives his role and purposes in the classroom. It is concerned with effects of the pervasiveness of language on time-tabling and on whether the teaching of English should be seen as a separate activity in itself. A number of questions relate to the kinds of activities undertaken, their relative importance and interdependence. Particular attention is paid to the place of spoken language in the classroom, to drama, to reading and to the kind of writing required of children. Questions are asked also about the emphasis to be placed on skills—compared, especially, with the encouragement of imaginative response. Finally, some attempt is made to examine formal assessment.

In the case of both questionnaires it is finally the questions themselves to which the teacher responds and the degree to which these effectively 'tap' attitudes to the underlying issues depends not only on the salience of the individual items used but on the lack of ambiguity with which they were presented.

The Samples of Teachers

The target populations from which samples of teachers were selected were, in secondary schools, the co-ordinators or senior teachers responsible for English in the lower and middle forms (grades) and the teachers taking English in those grades for a minimum of 5 hours in each week. In primary schools they were principals and deputy-principals on the one hand and teachers of grades 2, 4 and 6 on the other. The sampling plan was one that selected, first, approximately 40 secondary and 40 primary schools in each of the larger states and a somewhat smaller number in the others, the proportions being such as to generate standard errors of the same size in each case. A random sample of the required number

of schools in each state was then selected, with the representation of government and non-government schools being proportionate to their total numbers. The following table lists the total number of schools in each state* and the number of schools included in the sample.

	Primary schools			Secondary schools		
	Govt	Non-Govt	Sample size	Govt	Non-Govt	Sample size
N.S.W.	1,922	492	40	295	107	42
Vic.	1,835	341	40	334	112	40
Qld	1,038	214	40	103	67	30
S.A.	476	109	40	93	19	24
W.A.	432	110	40	52	23	19
Tas.	142	35	30	30	6	17
N.T.	19	3	..	2	..	..
A.C.T.	30	14	22	9	2	..
	5,894	1,318	252	918	336	172

Before approaching Government schools we sought and obtained the approval of each State Department of Education. We also sought and obtained approval of the project from metropolitan Offices of Catholic Education. Not all of the schools approached were able to co-operate within the very short time available. Differences in this respect between states are at least partly due to our being able to distribute questionnaires earlier in some states than in others. The numbers of schools from which questionnaires were returned are those shown as 'processed' in the following table:

SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS

	Primary		Secondary	
	Approached	Processed	Approached	Processed
N.S.W.	40	29	42	26
Vic.	40	28	40	29
Qld	40	26	30	25
S.A.	40	32	24	20
W.A.	40	27	19	18
Tas.	30	19	17	15
A.C.T.	22	20	..	..
	252	181	172	133

This constitutes a 72% return for primary schools and, for secondary schools, 77%.

At the final stage of sampling each school was asked to provide the names of all teachers falling within the required categories. Where more than four teachers were listed, the final sample of teachers was nominated by using a random method of selection. It was intended that principals of primary schools would be treated as a category separate from their classroom teachers and that senior supervising teachers in secondary schools would be treated separately, too. However, in practice, it was often not possible to make the distinctions; consequently categories have been collapsed. The numbers of teachers whose questionnaires have been returned and processed are:

* Numbers of schools, from *Schools 1969*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

TEACHERS RETURNING QUESTIONNAIRES

	Primary	Secondary
N.S.W.	111	101
Vic.	104	106
Qld	102	86
S.A.	120	77
W.A.	97	66
Tas.	67	54
A.C.T.	76	..
	677	490

These teachers can also be categorised in terms of the type of school in which they teach, in terms of their sex, and in terms of the length of their experience, as follows:

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
Primary teachers							
From Govt schools	87	77	86	105	95	60	64
From Non-Govt schools	24	27	16	15	2	7	12
Men	48	44	48	46	45	23	33
Women	63	60	54	74	52	44	43
Secondary teachers							
From Govt schools	79	78	70	67	59	51	
From Non-Govt schools	22	28	16	10	7	3	
Men	50	42	31	34	36	26	
Women	51	64	55	43	30	28	
Primary teachers							
Less than 1 yr	1	5	3	5	5	9	2
1-5 yrs	18	20	34	34	33	13	14
6-10 yrs	25	20	12	29	15	11	16
11-15 yrs	19	16	9	17	15	12	9
16-20 yrs	8	12	10	9	11	10	10
More than 20 yrs	40	31	34	26	18	12	25
Secondary teachers							
Less than 1 yr	16	14	14	12	8	3	
1-5 yrs	36	45	29	27	24	20	
6-10 yrs	22	23	21	19	14	12	
11-15 yrs	9	11	8	12	8	8	
16-20 yrs	4	6	6	3	5	5	
More than 20 yrs	14	7	8	4	7	6	

It will be seen that it is difficult to generalise about the response patterns of sub-categories because the numbers in some of these are extremely small. In many cases it is also difficult to estimate the size of the populations from which the sub-samples have been drawn. For example, it is difficult to estimate how many teachers are involved in the teaching of English to Forms I-IV in N.S.W. schools. The scope of this study does not allow such estimates to be made, nor would it allow the computing and analysis of weighted totals summed across all states were such estimates readily available. For this reason the analyses which follow in the next two sections of this report present percentages for each state separately,* with no more than tentative reference to the categories of length of experience.

* In the draft report presented to the seminar the percentages quoted were based on unweighted totals summed across states.

To the extent to which schools which find time to respond differ from those that do not, the data reported here are biased and because some states are better represented than others, the degree of bias will not be the same for each state. The number of teachers included from any one state is not large—therefore much confidence should not be imputed to differences between states unless these differences are in themselves large. Generally this report ignores differences where they are not large enough to be regarded as significant at the .95 level of confidence.*

ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY TEACHERS

The questionnaire presented to secondary teachers consists of 78 items. In the questionnaire itself statements concerned with a particular issue are not as a rule grouped together. This discussion of results, however, takes items in related groups and treats them under a small number of headings. The report looks first at the subject, English, its identity and its content. This is followed by a discussion of how the teacher sees his purposes in relation to the needs of students. Particular aspects of English are discussed in turn: the place of literature and its treatment; the importance of oral language in the classroom and the question of variant usage; written expression and the circumstances in which good writing is generated or made possible; the purposes of drama in schools; and the matter of exercises and the teaching of skills. Finally, the report discusses organisation of the classroom and the qualifications and knowledge which are required of the teacher.

Results of the questionnaire are tabulated for each state separately and some comment is made on state differences. However, what is more remarkable is not that there are state differences, but that there are such close similarities between states.

The subject: English

For a seminar on the teaching of English it seems pertinent to consider whether, in fact, English has a content of its own. What teachers think of this can be seen in their responses to two items:

Item 19. — Unlike other subjects in the traditional curriculum, English has no content of its own.

Item 24. — English cannot be wholly incorporated in an integrated area of study but should be preserved as a separate area in its own right.

The majority of teachers reject the statement that English has no content; on the other hand this does not necessarily imply that they want to preserve English as a separate study. The percentage responses for each item are:

Item 19. (English has no content of its own)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	32	37	35	44	33	33
uncertain	6	8	2	8	11	..
disagree	62	55	63	48	56	67

Item 24. (English should be preserved as separate study)

agree	47	35	35	28	55	43
uncertain	14	12	14	13	9	14
disagree	39	53	51	59	36	43

* See A. N. Oppenheim, *Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement*, Heinemann, 1966, pp. 287-292, for a method of determining the statistical significance of differences between percentages.

Perhaps the important point to be noted in these tables is that in no state can there be said to be a consensus. As between states, teachers in South Australia are most ready to affirm that English has no content, and least ready to preserve its separateness. In respect to this latter attitude, the response pattern for South Australia contrasts sharply with that for Western Australia.

Although there is some controversy over whether English does constitute a separate area of study, there appears to be little disagreement that the various elements of English (literature, communication, and expression) should be taught in an integrated manner. Three statements deal with this:

Item 27. – The various elements of the English syllabus—literature, communication, expression, are best taught as separate courses.

Item 37. – Literature should not be regarded as a separate study from expression and communication skills.

Item 73. – Literature is best taught as a study separate from expression and communication skills.

To all three items the response is much the same: about 90% of teachers in all states do *not* think literature, expression and communication skills should be taught separately. The percentages for item 37, where disagreement is largest, are shown here.

Item 37. (Literature not regarded as a separate study)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	91	83	82	95	87	93
uncertain	1	6	1	1	3	2
disagree	8	11	17	4	10	5

The aims and purposes of English teaching

Two statements that appear together on the questionnaire refer, one, to the student's exploration of his own personal experience, and two, to his use of language in social interaction.

Item 45. – The chief concern of the English program is to enable the child to use his developing resources of language to explore his personal experiences.

Item 46. – A major aim of English must be to help the student develop language as a technique for interacting with other people.

These statements are not, of course, mutually exclusive; a large majority of teachers agree with the first, that the *chief* concern is to enable the student to use language 'to explore his personal experiences'. Support for the second, that a *major* aim is to develop language 'for interacting with other people', is overwhelming (100% in Tasmania). Percentages for item 45 are:

Item 45. (chief concern: use language to explore experiences)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	74	66	65	74	77	70
uncertain	12	14	9	14	6	11
disagree	14	20	26	12	17	19

In keeping with the view expressed in item 45, a similar proportion of teachers agree that their main role is to provide experiences:

Item 20. (The teacher's main role is that of providing experiences rather than formally instructing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	78	71	75	77	75	74
uncertain	8	8	3	12	6	5
disagree	14	21	22	11	19	21

But it should be noted that about 20% of teachers in most states reject this view about language and personal experience, whichever way it is expressed.

It should be expected from their view of the aims of their subject that teachers of English would be concerned with their students as people. Four items in the questionnaire explore the consequences of this.

Item 44. – There is little need for a teacher to be interested in his students as people.

Item 13. – The teacher of English should be wary of exploring with the child such questions as fear, sex, love and guilt.

Item 54. – In his classroom, the English teacher cannot avoid being concerned with questions of values and ethics.

Item 40. – There is little need for the teacher of English to share his personal response to literature with his classes.

Nearly all teachers disagree with the first statement, the majority of them strongly; teachers do see the need to be interested in their students as people. And most of them see no need to be wary about exploring questions of fear, sex, love and guilt:

Item 13.* (caution with questions of fear, sex, love, guilt)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	17	15	22	15	15	26
uncertain	4	7	9	8	1	6
disagree	79	78	69	77	84	68

Agreement about the impossibility of avoiding questions of ethics is general; and in Tasmania it is 100%. Teachers in all states are also generally agreed (that is, they disagree with the statement) on the need for the teacher to share with his students his personal response to literature:

Item 40. little need to share own response to literature)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	5	10	5	8	7	6
uncertain	4	3	2	4	2	2
disagree	91	87	93	88	91	92

* For reasons explained in the introductory section of this report, it is not permissible to generalise about differences of response from teachers when they are categorised in terms of their experience. The data suggest, however, that experienced teachers are much more likely to be cautious about these questions than are inexperienced teachers.

Item 13	Teaching experience			
	Less than 1 yr	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	More than 10 yrs
agree	10	14	17	28
uncertain	5	6	4	6
disagree	85	80	79	66

Item 18 places the question of examining in the context of this sensitive and humane approach:

Item 18. – The essence of English is a sensitive approach to life and literature and this is not amenable to testing by formal examination.

It is possible that the item is ambiguous but the fact that it elicited no great percentage of uncertain responses suggests that we can take the results at face value. Unfortunately difficulties of interpretation remain, and there is no other item that contains the question. However, it seems evident that a great many teachers must be questioning the relevance of formal examinations in English.

Item 18. (English not amenable to formal examination)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	72	66	58	75	77	66
uncertain	6	12	5	9	3	13
disagree	22	22	37	16	20	21

Four items looked at the purposes of English teaching at a more practical level.

Item 78. – Strong emphasis must be placed on study methods and skills of reading for comprehension if pupils are to take their place in a sophisticated, technological society.

Item 7. – Study of the media is one of the principal areas of language study.

Item 9. – Part of the English teacher's role is to help students to evaluate the techniques of advertising and of the mass media.

Item 16. – Even when teaching very able children the teacher should avoid being too concerned about direct preparation for later academic studies.

A preponderance of teachers in all states (in South Australia if not a preponderance, then at least a majority) agree that strong emphasis must be placed on study methods and reading skills in preparation for adulthood in a technological society.

Item 78. (emphasis on study skills for technological society)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	84	78	86	67	83	78
uncertain	7	14	5	13	8	9
disagree	9	8	9	20	9	13

Most English teachers agree that 'study of the media' is within the subject's compass, and they are in general agreement (between 96% and 99%) that helping students evaluate mass media techniques is part of their role. Percentages for item 7 are shown here:

Item 7. (the media a principal area of study)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	82	76	78	77	73	74
uncertain	5	11	7	12	12	9
disagree	13	13	15	11	15	17

They would, more often than not, avoid too much concern for later academic studies:

Item 16. (avoid concern about later academic studies)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	68	62	65	74	68	58
uncertain	5	8	1	8	6	7
disagree	27	30	34	18	26	35

Literature

Item 76. – Reading and the study of literature continues to be relevant to the pupil in the 1970s.

Item 1. – The study of literature should always be the central purpose of the English syllabus.

Item 35. – A major aim of English is to introduce children to the great literature of the English language and (in translation) to the literature of the world.

Just as there is general agreement that literature should not be regarded as a separate study, so there is almost complete agreement as to its continued relevance. Rather than indicating a complete rejection of McLuhan, however, this result may simply reveal that the question is naive. The centrality of literature is much more open to question; while about 40% agree that it should be central, more than half of those questioned disagree with this view:

Item 1. (study of literature central to English)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	43	33	38	41	41	44
uncertain	5	7	4	10	1	10
disagree	52	60	58	49	58	46

And more than a quarter of teachers are prepared to dispute that introducing children to 'great literature' is a major aim of English:

Item 35. (major aim to introduce children to great literature)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	72	61	65	57	70	68
uncertain	2	11	7	9	3	4
disagree	26	28	28	34	27	28

Teachers are divided on whether contemporary literature should be given emphasis over literature of the past, and most of them are against giving preference to native literature.

Item 72. – In English, emphasis should be placed on contemporary literature rather than on literature of the past.

Item 77. – It is more important to study the literature of your own country rather than that of others.

However, the proportion who are uncertain about the claims of contemporary literature is high in some states, particularly South Australia. And compared with, for example, Tasmanians, teachers in Victoria are traditionalists and universalists:

Item 72. (emphasis on contemporary literature)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	39	27	32	38	29	46
uncertain	12	9	16	20	5	11
disagree	49	64	52	42	66	43

Item 77. (more important to study native literature)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	18	16	33	21	21	32
uncertain	6	10	7	13	12	13
disagree	76	74	60	66	67	55

How much supervision there should be of students' reading is examined in two items:

Item 51. – Pupils must be given freedom to choose some literature, even if such freedom means that they often choose inferior works at certain stages of their development.

Item 68. – A student should be encouraged to read only that literature which he can understand and appreciate at a given stage in his development.

Teachers are almost unanimous in agreeing, as often as not strongly, that students should be given some freedom of choice even at the risk of their reading 'inferior works'. The majority, except in South Australia, are also unprepared to extend students. The proportion in all states who would extend students is, nevertheless, appreciable:

Item 68. (student reads only what he can understand and appreciate)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	56	52	57	36	65	57
uncertain	2	9	2	12	5	4
disagree	42	39	41	52	30	39

On the question of excluding wide reading from the assessment process, only in Queensland does a majority agree.

Item 34. – It is unnecessary to make any assessment based on material read during wide reading periods.

In no State, however, is there unanimity; even in New South Wales, where the proportion is lowest, 22% agree with the statement:

Item 34. (unnecessary to assess wide reading)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	22	34	52	36	35	39
uncertain	17	10	13	8	12	6
disagree	61	56	35	56	53	55

Item 4 asks about the importance of television and film study, in relation to that of literature.

Item 4. – The study of literature is the concern of the English teacher. Television and film study can only be peripheral to that.

For a majority, at least, this study is more than peripheral, and this is particularly so in South Australia:*

Item 4. (television and film study only peripheral)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	31	26	35	16	29	28
uncertain	6	8	9	6	3	4
disagree	63	66	56	78	68	68

* It also appears to be so with younger teachers. Although it is not sufficient to generalise this finding, the data suggest that inexperienced teachers are much less inclined than more experienced teachers to agree with the statement.

Item 4

	Experience			
	Less than 1 yr	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	More than 10 yrs
agree	15	22	18	49
uncertain	12	8	4	4
disagree	73	70	78	47

Two items refer to close textual analysis:

Item 39. – When studying literature, close textual examination is essential.

Item 48. – There is little value in close textual analysis of literature, in schools.

In each state a sizeable minority regard 'close textual analysis of literature' as essential and, although a majority does not claim it to be essential, less than half of teachers (except in Queensland, where the proportion is 55%) are prepared to agree that it has 'little value'. A middle group in each state seems to say at least that close textual analysis has its uses:

Item 39. (close textual analysis essential)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	29	34	21	22	32	22
uncertain	9	11	7	12	10	4
disagree	62	55	72	66	58	74

Item 48. (little value in close textual analysis)

agree	43	36	55	44	32	43
uncertain	4	12	7	9	10	4
disagree	53	52	38	47	58	53

Oral language

Under this heading is discussed, first, the place of oral language in the school and, second, its contribution to general language development. Correctness in speech is discussed separately.

Item 22. – Conversation and informal discussion are learning activities for which provision should be made in the normal English program.

Not only do nearly all teachers agree with this statement, but at least half of them register strong agreement. The question of *how much* provision remains open.

The relative importance of the whole speaking-listening mode might be gauged by examining how teachers respond to items 67 and 32.

Item 67. – Speaking and listening should concern the teacher of English more than reading and writing.

Item 32. – Because modern media have transported us into a new age of oracy, speaking and listening should gain precedence over reading and writing in classrooms within the next few years.

The majority of English teachers neither feel they should be more concerned about oracy than about literacy nor do they think that the situation will be changed within the next few years. Western Australian teachers in particular are likely to take this position. South Australians, on both questions, and teachers in New South Wales and Tasmania on the second, are a little more likely to take the opposite view. And in nearly all states there is a sizeable percentage of uncertain responses.

Item 67. (speaking and listening of more concern than reading and writing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	17	14	18	22	9	18
uncertain	20	18	20	19	14	21
disagree	63	68	62	59	77	61

Item 32. (speaking and listening should gain precedence in few years)

agree	28	19	18	22	9	29
uncertain	18	19	9	16	9	17
disagree	54	62	73	62	82	54

Item 41 refers to the contribution of speaking to language proficiency. Although not specifically referring to oral language, item 66 is discussed along with it, on the grounds that each statement has implications for the other.

Item 41. – Of all aspects of language, speaking has the most significant contribution to make towards the development of language proficiency.

Item 66. – Children learn language only by using it.

What should be noted about the response to item 41 is not the majority agreement but, first, the level of uncertainty expressed and, second, the not small proportion who do not agree that speaking contributes most to language development.

Item 41. (speaking contributes most to language proficiency)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	51	49	55	57	49	59
uncertain	16	20	16	24	18	18
disagree	33	31	29	19	33	23

That a large percentage agree that children learn language only by using it is not surprising. However, unless the statement is tautological and means to include reading and listening, it is difficult to interpret the effect on response of the word 'only'.

Item 66. (learn language only by using it)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	84	87	83	77	86	86
uncertain	6	3	3	8	..	3
disagree	10	10	14	15	14	11

Correctness in speech and writing

Under this heading is discussed, first, what is meant by correctness in speech and writing, second, the obligations of the school in this respect, and third, what this might imply for the 'correction' of written expression. Three items refer to the issue in a general way:

Item 15. – Correctness in speech and writing is an unimportant and arbitrary social category.

Item 64. – Since correctness in speech and writing are valued socially, it is necessary that teachers should be concerned with correct speech and writing.

Item 25. – The development of skill in speech does not mean attention to accent or vernacular, but ensuring that pupils can express their ideas with fluency and clarity.

A large majority of teachers in all states disagree with the statement that correctness is 'an unimportant and arbitrary social category' and the same kind of majority agrees that they should be concerned about correctness. Perhaps the terms 'accent' and 'vernacular' are not sufficiently precise, but teachers also claim, in very large numbers, that development of skill in speech does not mean attention to those two aspects. Or is it simply that the contrast with 'fluency and clarity' prejudices the answer? The position of most teachers seems clear enough; correctness is important and not to be categorised as merely a matter of etiquette:

Item 15. (correctness is unimportant and arbitrary)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	9	16	6	11	11	11
uncertain	5	4	1	8	3	3
disagree	86	80	93	81	86	86

Item 64. (because correctness valued, teachers should be concerned)

agree	83	76	86	78	87	89
uncertain	5	11	3	5	5	4
disagree	12	13	11	17	8	7

Item 25. (skill in speech means fluency and clarity)

agree	89	89	91	83	92	89
uncertain	2	4	2	8	2	..
disagree	9	7	7	9	6	11

What the school can do about this seems to depend to some extent on how the question is put:

Item 36. – The way pupils speak is in reality beyond the influence of the school.

Item 21. – Some time should be devoted in English lessons to correcting ungrammatical usage and improving poor pronunciation.

In some states almost half the teachers agree with the first statement; on the other hand, very few disagree with the second. A not insignificant number of English teachers seem therefore to be prepared to spend at least some time on an impossible task:

Item 36. (pupils' speech beyond influence of school)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	33	48	42	39	47	46
uncertain	7	13	6	12	8	13
disagree	60	39	52	49	45	39

Item 21. (some time to usage and pronunciation)

agree	93	89	96	86	94	96
uncertain	4	4	1	5	3	..
disagree	3	7	3	9	3	4

Items 43 and 75 take the issue further and, particularly with writing, attempt to sort out the priorities:

Item 43. – Instruction in correct usage is essential if pupils are to communicate effectively.

Item 75. – In student writing, the emphasis should be on effective communication rather than on correct usage.

Nearly all teachers would devote some time to correcting faulty usage and pronunciation, but when the question is put in the form of item 43, the numbers who disagree increase, and, whereas on item 21 (see above) there is very little difference between South Australian and Victorians, for item 43 the difference is significant:*

Item 43. (instruction in usage essential to effective communication)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	64	75	68	55	71	72
uncertain	11	7	11	15	5	9
disagree	25	18	21	30	24	19

In the ordering of priorities, most teachers place the emphasis in student writing on communication, rather than correct usage, but the proportion who do not is too large to be ignored:

* Significant at the .95 level of confidence.

Item 75. (emphasis in writing or communication, not usage)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	77	70	71	78	76	68
uncertain	7	15	13	14	2	8
disagree	16	15	16	8	22	24

Some of the implications of this are considered in three items:

Item 31. – Children should be permitted to write frequently and freely without insistence on technical correctness in all written work.

Item 6. – In correcting written work, it is unfair to students not to mark out all errors in every piece of work submitted.

Item 58. – A teacher should not attempt to mark all errors of usage on students' written work.

Teachers are not universally agreed that there should not be insistence on technical correctness; on the other hand, the majority agree that such insistence is inadvisable:

Item 31. (write freely without insistence on correctness)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	74	72	73	73	70	65
uncertain	4	6	2	7	1	7
disagree	22	22	25	20	29	28

Furthermore, it is obvious that most teachers see the exhaustive correction of errors in written work as impracticable:

Item 6. (unfair not to mark out all errors)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	15	24	5	14	15	19
uncertain	4	8	2	4	..	4
disagree	81	68	93	82	85	77
Item 58. (not attempt to mark all errors of usage)						
agree	78	70	88	84	86	65
uncertain	5	7	3	4	..	9
disagree	17	23	9	12	14	26

On marking errors, Queensland teachers seem less likely to be compulsive than those in, for example, Victoria and Tasmania.

Written Expression

It has already been noted, under the heading of 'correctness in speech and writing', that a majority of teachers (about 70%) agree that students should be permitted to write frequently and freely. The effectiveness of creative, free expression is referred to in two items:

Item 71. – In school, the most effective means to literacy is through creative work and free expression.

Item 26. – Children will never learn to write coherently and fluently if their only experience is creative writing and free expression.

The two statements are not mutually exclusive. In any case, this is clearly a question on which teachers in all states are not only divided but, to some extent, uncertain:

Item 71. (creative work most effective means to literacy)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	50	49	43	49	55	46
uncertain	18	22	15	20	18	13
disagree	32	29	42	31	27	41

Item 26. (never learn to write well with creative writing only)

agree	54	49	52	49	49	59
uncertain	9	14	7	15	9	9
disagree	37	37	41	36	42	32

The relative importance of imaginative writing on the one hand and practical writing on the other is explored in items 23 and 33:

Item 23. – The most important writing is the poetic or imaginative use of language which permits the student to explore his own feeling and thoughts.

Item 33. – For most children, the emphasis in the classroom should be placed on practical writing: for example, letters, reports, plans.

Although most teachers in all states place more importance on imaginative than on practical writing, there are noticeable state differences. Queensland teachers are somewhat more likely than others to favour practical writing, South Australian least. Tasmanians are strongest in their support of the importance of imaginative writing:

Item 23. (most important writing is imaginative writing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	66	59	54	70	62	79
uncertain	13	15	7	13	8	6
disagree	21	26	39	17	30	15

Item 33. (emphasis on practical writing)

agree	21	13	29	3	21	16
uncertain	9	9	5	4	3	6
disagree	70	78	66	93	76	78

It is possible that some confusion about the notion of children being allowed to write frequently and freely is evident when responses for items 31 and 2 are placed side by side:

Item 31. – Children should be permitted to write frequently and freely without insistence on technical correctness in all written work.

Item 2. – Frequent exposure to many examples of good writing accompanied by some writing practice, will do more to improve student writing than will constant practice with in-frequent exposure to good stylistic models.

The percentages are presented without any attempt at interpretation, except to remark that teachers in Queensland are more likely to favour the use of exemplars than are those in Tasmania:

Item 31. (permit children to write frequently and freely)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	74	72	73	73	70	65
uncertain	4	6	2	7	1	7
disagree	22	22	25	20	29	28

Item 2. (exposure to good writing more important than practice)

agree	72	76	85	75	80	68
uncertain	6	12	4	12	6	6
disagree	22	12	11	13	14	26

As well as giving students frequent exposure to good models, the majority of teachers would have them discuss and plan their writing tasks in class:

Item 12. (In general, written work should be discussed and planned beforehand in class.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	83	83	87	82	88	81
uncertain	7	3	3	4	3	..
disagree	10	14	10	14	9	19

There are two items which ask how much freedom should be allowed or guidance given on the length of a writing task:

Item 10. – Once a student begins a writing task, it should usually be up to him to decide how long it should be and whether or not he will complete it.

Item 61. – Teachers should ensure that clear guidelines are given to students regarding the length of most assigned written work.

Except in South Australia, where opinion is evenly divided, the majority of teachers does not see the student as an autonomous writer. Furthermore, in most states, at least half would ensure that clean guidelines are given. In both cases the most marked contrast in response pattern is between South Australian and Queensland teachers:

Item 10. (student decides how long and whether to complete)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	30	31	21	44	36	35
uncertain	11	9	10	12	..	6
disagree	59	60	69	44	64	59
Item 61. (clear guidelines on length)						
agree	56	52	67	38	46	50
uncertain	10	6	6	8	8	9
disagree	34	42	27	54	46	41

On the question of how far his responsibility extends, the English teacher, more often than not, does not accept this responsibility for students' writing in other subjects:

Item 28. (It is the English teacher who must assume final responsibility for the way students write, even in other specialist subjects.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	39	31	42	28	39	21
uncertain	5	8	6	7	7	4
disagree	56	61	52	65	54	75

The responses indicate that his wider responsibility is accepted by relatively more teachers in Queensland than in Tasmania.

Three questions on drama attempt to define teachers' attitudes to this activity:

Item 53.– If a choice had to be made at the junior secondary level, scripted drama (either published or written by the students), is more valuable than free drama, e.g. movement, miming, improvisation.

Item 74. – Child drama in the junior secondary school is largely concerned with the experience of the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience.

Item 42. – One of the functions of drama in the junior secondary school is for the child to develop awareness of the audience's needs as well as attempting to satisfy his own.

A large majority of teachers recognises the importance of improvised and informal drama at the junior secondary level and a further small percentage of them are

unprepared to commit themselves. Scripted drama obtains least support in South Australia and most (although still minority) support in Queensland:

Item 53. (scripted drama more valuable than free drama)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	22	16	28	10	24	17
uncertain	17	18	13	22	12	13
disagree	61	66	59	68	64	70

Teachers are divided, and there are differences between states (compare New South Wales with Tasmania) on how importantly the experience *qua* experience should be viewed. They are rather more agreed (and this time New South Wales and South Australia represent the extremes) that *one* function is to develop an awareness of the needs of the audience:

Item 74. (drama concerned with the experience)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	35	42	47	51	41	57
uncertain	7	7	6	14	6	6
disagree	58	51	47	35	53	37

Item 42. (one function of drama to develop audience awareness)

agree	87	67	79	57	65	63
uncertain	4	11	3	9	18	6
disagree	9	22	18	34	17	31

In all states, a large majority sees no need for the teachers to have a knowledge of stagecraft:

Item 65. (A specialist knowledge in stage-craft is not necessary for the teaching of drama in the secondary school.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	69	76	72	70	74	76
uncertain	12	8	6	16	11	5
disagree	19	16	22	14	15	19

It seems that in this area of drama, attitudes are still being sorted out: most teachers give priority to improvised activity, yet there is still a large concern for playing to an audience. Or is it that these statements do not make the question sufficiently clear?

Exercises and skill learning

One area that requires more attention, according to most teachers, is that of listening skills and aural comprehension:

Item 17. (Insufficient time is devoted in most classes to listening skills and aural comprehension.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	80	81	86	81	77	77
uncertain	9	7	3	7	6	4
disagree	11	12	11	12	17	19

Most teachers also agree that study of words is a prerequisite to richer writing. This often, but not necessarily, means that they believe in vocabulary exercises.

Item 29. – It is necessary to study words and their meanings if the range of pupils' writing is to be extended and enriched.

Item 69. – Formal exercises on vocabulary are unnecessary.

The response pattern for South Australia is remarkable in a number of respects. The percentage in favour of word study at all (75%) is smaller than in any other state, and of this smaller number less than half would use vocabulary exercises for the purpose. By way of contrast, in New South Wales, of the 95% who consider word study necessary, three teachers out of four advocate exercises:

Item 29. (necessary to study words and meanings)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	95	82	86	75	88	85
uncertain	3	7	4	7	3	8
disagree	2	11	10	18	9	7

Item 69. (vocabulary exercises unnecessary)

agree	17	31	26	49	27	24
uncertain	11	12	7	18	6	10
disagree	72	57	67	33	67	66

Item 60 questions the whole basis for exercising and testing specific skills:

Item 60. – Those aspects of English—punctuation, spelling, grammatical usage—which are usually tested in schools, form an inappropriate content which has been spuriously attached to English.

An appreciable proportion of teachers, albeit a minority, accept the proposition:

Item 60. (punctuation, spelling, grammar spurious as content)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	33	26	30	30	26	32
uncertain	6	11	9	16	4	7
disagree	61	63	61	54	70	61

In the light of this response it is to be expected that teachers are divided on the question of teaching grammar, and this is indeed the case. In the set of items that follow, percentages vary from item to item largely in response to the phrasing of the statement. As between states, Western Australia is most in favour of grammatical work, and New South Wales least.

Item 57. (Some grammar should be taught as an integral part of any English program in the secondary school.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	66	75	66	73	87	77
uncertain	7	12	8	12	6	6
disagree	27	13	26	15	7	17

Item 52. (Teaching of formal grammar is essential, if children are to learn to use language proficiently.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	23	39	25	21	48	30
uncertain	9	8	9	13	11	11
disagree	68	53	66	66	41	59

Item 5. (Time spent on teaching grammar is largely wasted.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	61	32	49	47	32	48
uncertain	5	13	7	14	11	9
disagree	34	55	44	39	57	43

Item 49. (Discussing questions of usage is almost impossible if students have no knowledge of the terminology and rules of grammar.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	42	44	49	47	53	50
uncertain	7	9	3	9	6	9
disagree	51	47	48	44	41	41

Item 62. (Recourse to grammatical rules and terminology is of little assistance when questions of usage are being discussed.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	43	43	45	46	33	43
uncertain	4	11	8	17	10	11
disagree	53	46	47	37	57	46

As with grammar, so with spelling there is division of opinion; there is also a not inconsiderable proportion of teachers who are uncertain. Again, Western Australian teachers are most likely to be in favour of formal and systematic work, but South Australians least likely:

Item 63. (Spelling cannot be learnt incidentally, therefore it must be taught systematically.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	25	33	42	20	45	33
uncertain	16	12	14	17	11	23
disagree	59	55	44	63	44	44

Item 11. (Drilling and formal instruction are not necessary for the learning of spelling.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	36	37	30	44	24	33
uncertain	15	12	10	17	14	13
disagree	49	51	60	39	62	54

Organisation of the school and classroom

Students can work in groups and so can teachers. What, in the eyes of teachers, are the consequences?

Item 47. – Group work, rather than individual work, is the more effective way to develop language competence.

Item 14. – The team teaching approach in English tends to encourage a disjointed approach.

These two statements reveal more uncertainty than any other item in the questionnaire. (In the case of group or individual student work, it is possible that teachers do not see these as alternatives.) Those who are not uncertain tend, on balance and particularly if Tasmanians, to see group work as being more effective than individual work and to be of the opinion that team teaching does *not* encourage a disjointed approach:

Item 47. (group work more effective than individual work)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	57	47	64	60	43	76
uncertain	22	29	23	26	30	15
disagree	21	24	13	14	27	9

Item 14. (team teaching encourages disjointed approach)

agree	29	24	14	18	24	22
uncertain	24	35	33	31	29	32
disagree	47	41	53	51	47	46

Streaming to cope with individual differences is referred to directly in three items:

Item 55. – Children will learn English more efficiently in a streamed class than in an unstreamed one.

Item 59. – Ideally, slow learners should be taught English in a separate class.

Item 8. – Less able students should be taught English in mixed ability groups rather than in streamed or graded groups.

The balance of opinion in states other than South Australia and Victoria, is in favour of streamed classes, although in all states the level of uncertain responses is high. When the question is focused on 'slow learners', the majority in favour of separate classes is larger in all states, but differences between some states are still quite large. There appear to be some inconsistencies between responses to items 59 and 8; these may be attributable to use of the word 'ideally' in item 59, and to distinctions teachers make between 'slow learners' and 'less able students'. The percentage for all three items are:

Item 55. (learn English more efficiently in streamed class)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	62	35	54	29	47	61
uncertain	19	28	21	26	23	13
disagree	19	37	25	45	30	26

Item 59. (ideally, slow learners in separate class)

agree	81	60	68	61	77	65
uncertain	5	14	10	19	8	11
disagree	14	26	22	20	15	24

Item 8. (less able students better in mixed ability groups)

agree	37	51	28	50	45	35
uncertain	13	15	9	19	10	15
disagree	50	34	63	31	45	50

Although teachers are obviously not unanimous about how best to cope with individual differences, they are in general agreement that the syllabus must make provision. Very few teachers disagree with item 3:

Item 3. – Diversity of linguistic backgrounds of secondary school students demands a syllabus which provides for differing rates of progress.

Similarly, very few teachers disagree about the need for specialist teachers to take remedial reading programs. The statement referred to is item 50:

Item 50. – There should be a remedial reading program with specially trained teachers in every school.

Teacher qualifications and knowledge

A number of statements look at the qualifications which teachers of English ought to possess. Traditionally, this has been a university degree with at least three units of English:

Item 38. – Major academic qualifications in English (e.g. three years University study of English) should be a pre-requisite for anyone teaching the subject in schools.

Teachers, however, are fairly evenly divided about this and in some states, for example, South Australia and Queensland, large numbers disagree with the statement:

Item 38. (major academic qualifications in English)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	53	48	41	27	43	41
uncertain	8	13	4	20	8	9
disagree	39	39	55	53	49	50

Respondents were also asked about the value of a knowledge of how language is acquired and developed:

Item 70. – In order to teach English effectively, a teacher needs to have a sound knowledge of the nature of language, its acquisition and development.

Item 30. – The nature of language, its acquisition and development is a specialised study which is of little help to the teacher of English.

A preponderance of teachers agrees that this knowledge is necessary; they reject the notion that it is an esoteric study:

Item 70. (teacher needs knowledge of linguistics)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	70	65	55	57	68	66
uncertain	7	16	9	13	6	10
disagree	23	19	36	30	26	24

Item 30. (linguistics a too specialised study)

agree	12	10	19	23	12	22
uncertain	7	10	10	9	14	13
disagree	81	80	71	68	74	65

It has been noted already (see item 15 under the heading of 'drama') that a large majority of teachers (about 70%) would reject the proposition that a specialist knowledge of stage-craft is necessary. For a great many teachers (but for a smaller proportion in Tasmania than in, for example, Victoria) this same negative view holds about any active engagement in creative activity:

Item 56. (Every teacher of English should be actively involved in creative activity (e.g. writing a novel, acting, film making).)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.
agree	35	31	39	39	40	50
uncertain	15	15	8	21	14	9
disagree	50	54	53	40	46	41

Perhaps this merely vindicates the view that schools should not be confused with the real life of our society.

Concluding comments

It would seem from the results of this questionnaire that the same issues divide secondary teachers of English in all states. It is generally only on the very broadest levels that any real consensus is reached. For example, they are agreed that literature, communication and expression should not be treated as separate studies; that reading and literature continue to be relevant; that the curriculum must consider individual differences; and that some provision should be made for

conversation and informal discussion in the classroom. It is also the case that while the majority of teachers do not readily relinquish their traditional roles in connection with preserving the literary heritage and conserving standard English usage and pronunciation, they are also ready to guide their students in new areas once considered peripheral to literature. It is in how all this is achieved and in how priorities are ordered that division of opinion appears.

ATTITUDES OF PRIMARY TEACHERS

Statements in the questionnaire cover a number of aspects of the teaching of English in the primary school but, as with the secondary questionnaire, statements are not grouped according to aspect. In the discussion that follows, however, statements have been regrouped. The report begins by considering basic assumptions about the curriculum, its emphases and purposes; the autonomy of the teacher in organising his work, or his need to depend on a syllabus provided by someone else; and the degree to which English is seen as pervading the curriculum and what this implies for time tabling. Issues concerned with the place of oral language, with writing in the classroom and with reading and literature are discussed in turn. Finally, the report looks at attitudes towards the teaching of spelling and grammar, the use of exercises, and questions of assessment and the setting of standards.

In the presentation of results of the questionnaire, responses are tabulated as percentages for each state separately. In discussing the tables, state differences are indicated and there is the danger that this might exaggerate their importance. What seems, however, to be most remarkable is not the difference but the similarity between states.

Teachers are to be found in all states on both sides of any difference of opinion.

Assumptions, emphases and purposes

Five statements in the questionnaire might be regarded as directed to the assumptions on which the primary curriculum is based. These are:

Item 47. – The only justifiable approach to primary education is a curriculum based on the child's experience.

Item 67. – Spoken English should have a pre-eminent place in primary education.

Item 49. – The chief concern of the school will always be to teach children to read and write.

Item 34. – Creativity is more important in the primary school than grammatical competence.

Item 31. – A teacher must first ascertain a child's weaknesses and design his teaching to compensate for them.

On the first of these statements, on the experienced-based curriculum, there is division among teachers in all states, although in some, notably in Victoria, the tendency is to agree rather than to disagree with the statement.

Item 47. (an experience-based curriculum)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree*	48	58	43	51	48	43	50
uncertain	12	13	12	15	15	15	6
disagree	40	29	45	34	37	42	44

* The figures shown in these tables are *percentages* for each state. In general, in this report, the category 'agree' includes those who 'agree strongly'; likewise with the category 'disagree'. The category 'uncertain' includes those who did not indicate any response.

There is also a noticeable reluctance, as indicated by the percentage of 'uncertain' responses, to take sides on the issue. By contrast, there is general agreement about the pre-eminence of spoken English:

Item 67. (spoken English pre-eminent)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	88	91	91	86	93	91	92
uncertain	5	4	2	4	2	4	2
disagree	7	5	7	10	5	5	6

In view of this it would appear, at first sight, inconsistent that many teachers, albeit a minority, can at the same time agree that the 'chief concern—will always be to teach children to read and write'. Nevertheless, for a majority in each state, reading and writing will not always be the chief concern. The differences between states (cf Victoria with Western Australia and South Australia in particular) are noticeable:

Item 49. (reading and writing will be the chief concern)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	26	18	38	38	39	33	22
uncertain	7	5	4	8	8	6	6
disagree	67	77	58	54	53	61	72

There are again state differences, with Victoria taking an extreme position at one end and Queensland and New South Wales at the other, on the relative importance of 'creativity' and 'grammatical competence', although teachers in all states are more likely to agree, than to disagree, with the statement:

Item 34. (creativity more important than grammatical competence)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	48	80	47	53	57	51	70
uncertain	17	5	15	13	14	18	12
disagree	35	15	38	34	29	31	18

The degree of uncertainty in some states might also be noted.

Although item 31 might properly be regarded as dealing with pedagogical technique, it is included in the discussion at this point because it had seemed to be indicative of one of the basic approaches to curriculum planning, the compensatory approach. Primary teachers in all states generally agree with the statement.

Item 31. (design teaching to compensate for weaknesses)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	88	87	95	83	89	89	90
uncertain	5	2	2	9	4	1	2
disagree	7	11	3	8	7	10	8

Two statements refer to purposes of primary education and two to short-term goals:

Item 64. – Children have not been given a comprehensive education in English until they have come to appreciate English literature.

Item 12. – The most important task of the primary school teacher is to teach the essentials of English and mathematics in preparation for the secondary school.

Item 38. – A teacher should try to ensure that each child interacts easily and valuably with other members of the class.

Item 22. – A primary teacher should have definite expectations of standards in each grade.

There is no general agreement about the need to appreciate literature, although teachers in all states are more likely to agree than to disagree with the statement, in the ratio of two to one:

Item 64. (no comprehensive education without appreciation of literature)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	58	56	67	57	61	63	68
uncertain	11	12	10	7	10	7	8
disagree	31	32	23	36	29	30	24

They are in some states, and notably in the Australian Capital Territory, much more unanimous in disclaiming, as 'the most important task', preparation for secondary schooling.* It is perhaps more significant that in many states about one-third of the teachers will *agree* with the statement:

Item 12. (preparation for secondary school)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	30	21	33	25	32	30	13
uncertain	3	1	3	5	3	4	2
disagree	67	78	64	70	65	66	85

Teachers are almost unanimous about the importance of interaction between children, although use of the word 'valuably' may have pre-empted the options:

Item 38. (ensure that each child interacts easily and valuably)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
strongly agree	55	61	53	57	51	47	60
agree	41	38	47	43	46	52	40
uncertain	3	1	..	..	2	..	..
disagree	1	..	..	..	1	1	..

The majority of teachers—in some states, notably Tasmania, a preponderance—agree that the teacher should have definite expectations of grade standards. But the percentage who disagree in, for example, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, and New South Wales cannot be ignored:

Item 22. (definite expectations of grade standards)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	71	69	76	75	79	93	65
uncertain	4	5	5	7	5	3	7
disagree	25	26	19	18	16	4	28

Teacher autonomy and professional knowledge

The position of the primary school teacher is somewhat different from that of the secondary school teacher in two major respects. Firstly, he teaches all aspects of the curriculum, having responsibility for the child's education in all subjects. Secondly, unlike many secondary teachers, he is not constrained by an external examination system.

At the same time, the liberalisation of departmental syllabuses has released teachers from a necessary conformity to curriculum content and teaching styles. These factors, taken together, should give the teacher wider scope for individuality in his teaching. How much actual autonomy he has is dependent upon the school itself, particularly the attitude of the principal. But, given freedom in his classroom,

* It should be noted that the percentages for teachers in the Australian Capital Territory are quite different, for a number of items, from the percentages for teachers in New South Wales.

how much initiative is he prepared to take? Two items in the questionnaire explore this question directly; three others are related to it:

Item 63. – The primary teacher needs a definite syllabus designed by curriculum specialists.

Item 41. – A primary teacher should be free to plan his own courses guided chiefly by his own professional knowledge.

Item 47. – The only justifiable approach to primary education is a curriculum based on the child's experience.

Item 52. – A teacher's approach to classroom organisation should always be free and spontaneous.

Item 48. – A teacher should always plan his day in detail.

Percentages for items 63 and 41 are presented together because at first sight it would seem that agreement with one precludes agreement with the other. The results show clearly that this is not so, except perhaps in Victoria and Western Australia; for some respondents the teacher's right to plan his own courses must be seen as independent of his need to rely on specialists' syllabuses.

Item 63. (teacher needs curriculum designed by specialists)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	50	23	67	45	59	51	34
uncertain	13	13	8	16	12	7	12
disagree	37	64	25	39	29	42	54
Item 41. (teacher—free to plan own courses)							
agree	56	67	57	53	38	59	71
uncertain	6	11	14	16	17	22	5
disagree	38	22	29	31	45	19	24

Apart from the question of interpretation, these percentages are notable for wide state differences. Less than a quarter of Victorian teachers see need for an externally written syllabus, compared with two-thirds of teachers in Queensland. And on the question of teacher autonomy itself, the attitude of teachers in the Australian Capital Territory, in particular, contrasts markedly with that of teachers in Western Australia. On this latter question the percentage of 'uncertain' responses (e.g. in Tasmania) must also be taken into account. One might also expect to find that experienced teachers are more likely to expect freedom to plan courses than are those with little experience. For reasons explained earlier, in the discussion of the sample, it would be unwise to generalise from the results in this respect. However, although there are such differences, these are not marked. While more than 56% of teachers with 6 years experience or more agree with the statement (item 41), the figure for teachers with less than one year's experience is as high as 47%. Uncertainty is somewhat more likely among younger teachers (23%) than it is among the most experienced group (11%).

Item 47 is included for consideration among this group of items because it may be thought to have implications for the question of who plans the curriculum. As noted on page 2, there is division of opinion in all states about the experience-based curriculum.

Within the classroom itself, planning the day in detail is not seen as precluding, except perhaps in Victoria, a 'free and spontaneous' response. But the way in which teachers from various states respond to the two statements (items 52 and 48) is illuminating. Note that, while teachers in all other states show a tendency to agree with both these statements, the majority of those of Victoria and Western Australia

seem to represent unique but divergent points of view. When a Victorian says that he believes in a 'free and spontaneous' approach, it seems that he also rejects planning in detail; when a Western Australian opts for detailed planning he will mean by this that he distrusts too much freedom and spontaneity. The percentages for both these items are presented together for comparison:

Item 52. (free and spontaneous approach to classroom organisation)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	54	70	59	64	34	60	67
uncertain	11	6	10	8	11	7	4
disagree	35	24	31	28	55	33	29

Item 48. (always plan the day in detail)

agree	62	24	55	62	79	64	49
uncertain	5	4	4	6	3	9	2
disagree	33	72	41	32	18	27	49

Two items referred to the background knowledge required of the teacher:

Item 39. – A teacher needs to attend organised seminars in order to keep abreast of current educational trends.

Item 23. – A teacher needs some knowledge of the ways children acquire language in order to teach English effectively.

Most teachers in all states (about 90%) accept that it is necessary to keep abreast of current trends by attending seminars; they agree also that teachers need to understand how children acquire language. Only three teachers in the whole sample disagree strongly with the first statement; none disagree strongly with the second.

One item questions the importance of the teacher's own ability in writing.

Item 5. – A teacher can teach English effectively even if his own written English is not always accurate.

Only a minority agree with the statement, but in three states (Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia) that minority is a large one. (Can one cavil about the meaning of 'is not always accurate'?)

Item 5. (teacher's own written English need not always be accurate)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	31	40	31	40	40	27	34
uncertain	14	13	6	10	13	12	5
disagree	55	47	63	50	47	61	61

Pervasiveness and the timetable

One of the more obvious characteristics of language is the way it pervades all that occurs in the classroom, no matter what subject syllabuses the curriculum is presented under. From this it is sometimes argued that treating English as a subject involves misconceptions about the function of language and how it is acquired.

It seems from their response to the following items that Australian teachers do not generally accept this argument.

Item 3. – Because language is seen as pervading the work in other subject areas, no special time slots should be given to a subject called English.

Item 57. – Because 'every lesson is an English lesson' there is no need to allocate time specifically to English.

Item 7. – There should be no specified length of time each week for the teaching of English.

Item 40. – At least one period in each day should be devoted solely to instruction in English.

When the question is put in the form of item 3, a large majority in most states rejects the statement. However, note the degree of unanimity in, for example, Western Australia and the comparative lack of it in the Australian Capital Territory.

Item 3. (no special time slots to subject English)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	20	26	17	18	9	21	31
uncertain	6	6	1	7	..	9	1
disagree	74	68	82	75	91	70	68

Perhaps use of the phrase 'time slots' in Item 3 is loaded. Essentially the same question is asked in Item 57, but the differences between states, although placing them in a similar rank order, are somewhat less than they are for Item 3.*

Item 57. (no need to allocate time specifically to English)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	13	18	12	15	4	13	17
uncertain	5	5	1	2	5	3	5
disagree	82	77	87	83	91	84	78

Given that a large majority of teachers do see a need to allocate time specifically to English, some of the possible implications can be tested by examining their responses to Items 7 and 40. In all but two states (Western Australia and Queensland) a majority of teachers is prepared to leave the total weekly hours for English unspecified, but the proportion who disagree with this statement (i.e., who would specify total length of time) is by no means small. The daily period attracts more support than the weekly specification in most states, but still finds teachers divided. There are notable state differences in the patterns of response:

Item 7. (no specified length of time each week)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	66	74	45	58	37	63	64
uncertain	3	5	5	3	4	6	2
disagree	31	21	50	39	59	31	34

Item 40.† (at least one period in each day)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	58	50	86	51	57	43	48
uncertain	11	9	..	8	9	15	8
disagree	31	41	14	41	34	42	44

* Nevertheless, the difference between Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory is, even for Item 57, statistically significant at the .95 level of confidence.

† There is a noticeable difference between more experienced and less experienced teachers in respect to this statement. While it is not possible to generalise in terms of experience because of the way in which the data are analysed, the percentages as tabulated do suggest a relationship.

Item 40. —	Experience categories					
	Less than 1 yr	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-20 yrs	More than 20 yrs
agree	33	46	51	62	57	72
uncertain	17	11	8	5	6	8
disagree	50	43	41	33	37	20

One interpretation of these last four items taken together is that, apart from the small minority who would specify not at all and the somewhat larger group (still, in most states, a minority) that would specify the time table completely, many teachers see a need to allocate some time to English, perhaps even to schedule it, while at the same time, retaining some flexibility across the whole week. Taking as an example the case of Victorian teachers it is found that, while 77% would allocate *at least some* time (and 68% require *at least some* time slots), for no more than 21% does this imply specifying the length of weekly time; however, for 50% it does mean retaining at least one period in each day for the subject.

A similar pattern is found in most states, but the proportion who would timetable the subject is largest in Western Australia and Queensland; and Queensland, for some reason, is very firmly wedded to the idea of at least one period per day. In summary, however, it must be pointed out that, for most teachers in Australian primary schools, English is still seen as a separate subject requiring, in the eyes of large numbers, daily timetabling.

Oral language, its place and its importance

Under this heading is discussed not only the place oral language occupies in the classroom but also its importance in the process of language development. It has already been noted that teachers generally agree that spoken English should have a pre-eminent place in primary education.
But, while a majority are prepared to reject the statement:

Item 49. – The chief concern of the school will always be to teach children to read and write.

teachers are uncertain and divided over what will happen in the near future:

Item 28. – Because of television, speaking and listening will gain precedence over reading and writing within the next few years.

From the percentages that are presented below it would seem that the effect of television is felt to be more potent in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory than elsewhere, but there is little correlation between this and attitudes towards the continuing status of reading and writing.

Item 49. (reading and writing will be the chief concern)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	26	18	38	38	39	33	22
uncertain	7	5	4	8	8	6	6
disagree	67	77	58	54	53	61	72

Item 28. (speaking and listening will gain precedence)

agree	41	29	42	27	32	31	41
uncertain	16	16	18	19	22	21	22
disagree	43	55	40	54	46	48	37

The question of primacy is explored in two more items:

Item 46. – Teachers should be as concerned with listening comprehension as they are with reading comprehension.

Item 24. – Children will explore and extend the resources of their language much more effectively in talking than in writing.

The first of these is universally accepted. But, while it is heartening to find that listening comprehension is now recognised as requiring the same sort of attention

from the teacher as reading comprehension, perhaps part of the reason for the statement's ready acceptance is that it implies no necessary change in the social structure of the traditional classroom. The second statement may do so; while support for it is strong, it is by no means unanimous:

Item 24. (develop language more effectively in talking than in writing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	70	82	79	71	69	72	78
uncertain	10	4	7	12	13	13	2
disagree	20	14	14	17	18	15	20

If children are to 'explore and extend the resources of their language' in talking, this presumably means making provision for more child-generated talk. How do teachers react to children talking?

Item 1. – Most of the time, children work better in a quiet classroom.

Item 33. – The silent classroom has no place in the primary school today.

While the cynical might be amused, others might well be disturbed by teachers' equation of work and quietness. Nevertheless in the light of their replies to Item 1, it is not surprising that a majority disagree with the categorical statement in Item 33.

Differences between states on the place of 'the silent classroom' are too large to be ignored but, because of the lack of correlation between the two items, not easy to interpret. While quiet classrooms ought to be the norm in Western Australia, it is difficult to know what to expect in New South Wales:

Item 1.* (work better in a quiet classroom)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	87	79	86	81	91	80	86
uncertain	3	8	3	4	1	6	1
disagree	10	13	11	15	8	14	13
Item 33. (silent classroom has no place)							
agree	44	33	25	33	20	36	34
uncertain	5	9	2	5	5	12	2
disagree	51	58	73	62	75	52	64

Another aspect of the place of oral language that is considered in the questionnaire is the teacher's attitude to formal speaking in class. Teachers generally agree, often strongly, with Item 30:

Item 30. – Children should be encouraged to develop the ability to speak to the whole class.

and a third of the teachers (even more in Queensland and New South Wales) would expect every child to develop this ability:

Item 53. (A teacher should not expect every child to be able to speak to the whole class.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	53	63	46	63	60	61	64
uncertain	3	3	2	5	6	6	1
disagree	44	34	52	32	34	33	35

* While it is not possible to generalise about this, the returns indicate that the more experienced teacher is more likely to register his support as 'strongly agree'. 'Strength' of agreement seems to reflect years of experience.

Views about the developmental function of oral language are likely to be inter-related with views about the role of informal speech. One aspect of this is examined in Item 36:

Item 36. – A child learns more about the use of English in the playground than in the classroom.

While many teachers in most states express uncertainty, the large majority disagree with the statement. Teachers in the Australian Capital Territory are more evenly divided than teachers elsewhere.

Item 36. (learn more about usage in playground than in classroom)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	23	25	20	20	14	19	36
uncertain	9	17	7	13	21	18	18
disagree	68	58	73	67	65	63	46

Attitudes to the teaching of drama and to the use by children of classroom space are considered here, under the heading of 'oral language', on the assumption that they are relevant to those theories of language development that see growth in language and the acquisition of personal identity as highly interdependent. Of the three items presented, two are concerned directly with drama and the third is not irrelevant:

Item 54. – The aim of drama work is that children should be able to present simple plays to an audience.

Item 56. – Drama and mime can be taught effectively without the special provision of an open-space area.

Item 2. – An open area is essential in the primary school.

It is worth noting that a large majority of teachers do not see the presentation of plays to an audience as the aim of work in drama. While this is true for all states, there are quite large differences between some of them:

Item 54. (aim to present plays to audience)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	14	11	34	23	25	22	10
uncertain	4	3	3	4	6	3	2
disagree	82	86	63	73	69	75	88

Furthermore, while the majority in most states (but not in Queensland) agree that the teaching of drama and mime is still possible without an open-space area, a preponderance of teachers in all states regards the provision of open space as essential.

Item 56.* (drama can be taught without open area)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	57	61	46	63	56	61	61
uncertain	6	6	1	3	5	6	2
disagree	37	33	53	34	39	33	37
Item 2. (open area essential)							
agree	85	89	73	73	81	79	74
uncertain	3	6	16	9	8	13	9
disagree	12	5	11	18	11	8	17

* Our data suggest that more experienced teachers are readier than less experienced teachers to accept this statement.

Teachers were also asked about the effect of streaming on language development:

Item 8. – Language development is fostered more readily in mixed ability than in streamed groups.

In all states mixed ability groups are more favoured in this respect than streamed ones, but there is a high degree of uncertainty and a notable difference between Victoria on the one hand and New South Wales (including A.C.T.) and Western Australia on the other:

Item 8. (language fostered more readily in mixed ability groups)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	50	71	60	60	48	60	46
uncertain	17	13	13	20	21	16	17
disagree	33	16	27	20	31	24	37

Writing: imagination and correctness

A number of statements in the questionnaire deal directly with the relationship between imagination and practical skill:

Item 11. – The child beginning school should be encouraged to write imaginatively even though he may not have achieved any great skill in spelling and handwriting.

Item 55. – Children will become better writers if they concentrate on 'practical' writing tasks e.g. letters, writing paragraphs, etc.

Item 19. – Children will become better writers if they are encouraged to concentrate on creative or imaginative writing.

Item 60. – Children will most readily acquire the fundamental skills of writing by being allowed to write creatively.

Item 13. – Children cannot be expected to write creatively unless they are first taught the fundamental skills of writing.

Teachers in all states generally agree with the first of these statements; what differences there are between states relate to the strength of this agreement:

Item 11. (encourage even beginners to write imaginatively)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
strongly agree	50	56	40	61	54	57	67
agree	42	36	48	33	38	36	29
uncertain	3	2	4	3	1	3	1
disagree	5	6	8	3	7	4	3

Item 11 puts the case for imaginative writing *per se*, but only for beginners. The same question was not asked about older children, but some idea of the kind of writing that teachers think children should be engaged in might be gathered from their response to items 55 and 19. Specifically these items relate kind of writing to improvement. Except in Western Australia, where it is 30%, only a small minority of teachers favour 'practical' tasks as the means to better writing; the majority see 'creative or imaginative writing' as serving this end. In some states (and notably in the Australian Capital Territory) this majority is large; in those where it is smaller there is a corresponding increase in the proportion who are uncertain:

Item 55. (better writers if concentration on practical writing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	15	12	21	13	30	15	6
uncertain	6	6	7	9	9	4	6
disagree	79	82	72	78	61	81	88

Item 19. (better writers if concentration on creative writing)

agree	71	71	65	54	61	63	78
uncertain	9	10	10	19	14	15	8
disagree	20	19	25	27	25	22	14

For many teachers the implication is that children will acquire the fundamental skills of writing by writing, but the proportion who see skill as a prerequisite to 'creative writing' is large enough to indicate a real division of opinion. Although it is New South Wales teachers who are least likely to place their faith in creative writing as a means to skill, it is Queensland teachers who are most likely to see skill as a prerequisite. Victorian teachers are found at the opposite end of the scale on both aspects:

Item 60. (fundamental skills acquired by writing creatively)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	42	64	54	49	56	57	62
uncertain	12	10	8	14	9	18	4
disagree	46	26	38	37	35	25	34

Item 13. (cannot write creatively unless first taught skills)

agree	41	20	48	34	30	36	33
uncertain	4	6	5	10	6	6	5
disagree	55	74	47	56	64	58	62

How far teachers should be concerned with grammatical correctness or with spelling and punctuation in the 'creative work' of their pupils is taken up specifically in three items:

Item 34. – Creativity is more important in the primary school than grammatical competence.

Item 44. – Grammatical correctness should not be neglected even in creative work.

Item 50. – A teacher should not bother too much about correct spelling and punctuation in the creative work of his pupils.

The first of these items has already been discussed under the heading of 'assumptions, emphases and purposes', where it was noted that teachers in all states are more likely to agree than to disagree that creativity is more important than competence and particularly so in Victoria (80%) and the Australian Capital Territory (70%). This does not mean, however, that they are prepared to neglect grammatical correctness; it appears to be rather a question of ordering priorities. Nevertheless, the proportion who disagree (i.e. who are prepared to neglect grammatical correctness in creative work) is high enough (32% in A.C.T.) to represent a sizeable body of opinion.

Item 44.* (grammatical correctness should not be neglected)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	73	71	76	72	75	73	60
uncertain	7	10	1	6	6	3	8
disagree	20	19	23	22	19	24	32

* What evidence there is in the data about the effect of experience on attitudes towards grammatical correctness suggests that more experienced teachers are less likely to neglect correctness than inexperienced ones.

In view of their attitudes to grammatical usage, the readiness of teachers to treat spelling and punctuation lightly is surprising, perhaps the wording of the statement, 'should not bother too much', prejudices the replies:

Item 50. (should not bother too much about spelling and punctuation in creative work)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	70	72	61	61	65	67	83
uncertain	6	7	6	10	5	4	5
disagree	24	21	33	29	30	29	12

The questions of teaching grammar and spelling will be discussed in more detail under subsequent headings. The contribution of word study to children's writing is looked at in item 26:

Item 26. – The study of words and their meanings will enrich the child's writing.

There is general agreement about this in most states, but the difference between Victorians and Western Australians, at least, reaches statistical significance:*

Item 26. (study of words will enrich child's writing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	92	80	91	92	95	90	86
uncertain	3	8	5	2	5	3	5
disagree	5	12	4	6	..	7	9

Support for 'creative' writing does not seem to preclude the notion that children should be taught to plan their essays:

Item 43. – If children are taught to plan their ideas in essay writing they will become better writers.

Support for this statement is to be found in all states, but it is somewhat lower in Victoria and Tasmania:

Item 43. (better writers if taught to plan ideas)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	84	70	84	83	79	71	79
uncertain	7	12	7	8	15	13	3
disagree	9	18	9	9	6	16	18

Many teachers, particularly in Victoria, are not concerned about children finishing work, but the proportion who are approximates one half in most states.

Item 66. – Children should not be allowed to leave work unfinished.

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	48	31	54	53	53	42	41
uncertain	12	7	5	9	13	10	6
disagree	40	62	41	38	34	48	53

The question of assessment of written work—whether it improves children's writing and whether it is necessary—is referred to in three items:

Item 25. – Children will become better writers if all their written work is given a mark.

Item 37. – A teacher should not attempt to mark all errors of usage in children's written work.

Item 59. – Formal assessment of some written work is essential in primary schools.

* The difference is significant at the .99 level of confidence.

Only a minority of teachers—a very small minority in Victoria but quite a large one in New South Wales—see giving a mark as effecting improvement in writing.

Item 25. (better writers if all written work marked)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	28	8	19	25	19	24	12
uncertain	5	7	5	9	9	13	10
disagree	67	85	76	66	72	63	78

In any case, only a minority—hardly any in Western Australia—would attempt to mark all errors of usage; but, predictably, most see a place for some formal assessment. That as high a proportion as 26% in Victoria disagree indicates a sizeable erosion of traditional attitudes.

Item 37. (not attempt to mark all errors)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	84	79	76	79	95	79	86
uncertain	3	7	3	2	2	4	4
disagree	13	14	21	19	3	17	10

Item 59. (some formal assessment essential)

agree	85	63	90	87	87	87	84
uncertain	6	11	2	4	5	1	2
disagree	9	26	8	9	8	12	14

Reading and literature.

Although the issue was not explored in detail, there are indications that teachers are divided on how children should be taught to read. Within the general division, Tasmanian teachers tend to disavow the need to use words from the child's oral vocabulary. There also appears to be a tendency for both South Australians and Tasmanians to adopt a word rather than a sentence approach, while the reverse is true for Victorians:

Item 16. (Words used in the teaching of reading should be those from the child's own oral vocabulary.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	43	50	50	45	40	36	45
uncertain	5	..	3	5	10	3	4
disagree	52	50	47	50	50	61	51

Item 45. (Children must learn to read words before they can read sentences.)

agree	50	26	44	61	44	58	41
uncertain	8	12	5	9	12	15	6
disagree	42	62	51	30	44	27	53

Teachers are also divided on the degree of preparation children should be given before being asked to read a passage.

Although divided, Western Australians are far more likely to teach specific vocabulary than are, for example, Queenslanders.

Item 35. (The teacher should teach the vocabulary specific to a passage before the children read it.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	41	35	34	50	67	45	36
uncertain	9	6	8	9	2	15	5
disagree	50	59	58	41	31	40	59

Although there is noticeable uncertainty in some states, teachers tend not to agree that comprehension exercises make good readers. This tendency is most apparent in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory; it is least apparent in Queensland and New South Wales.

Item 14. (Children will become good readers if they are given comprehension tests on material they have read.)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	37	18	40	24	24	21	19
uncertain	8	9	6	12	15	15	10
disagree	55	73	54	64	61	64	71

In the light of this response it might be wise to reconsider the significance of the general agreement that listening comprehension is as important as reading comprehension (Item 46).

A statement about the value of streaming for reading follows immediately in the questionnaire a statement about its efficacy for language development:

Item 8. – Language development is fostered more readily in mixed ability than in streamed groups.

Item 9. – Later in the primary school streaming is advisable for the teaching of reading skills to children of widely differing abilities.

It has already been noted that, while many teachers are uncertain, more teachers favour mixed groups than streamed when language development is being considered. However, in the context of Item 9 there is generally agreement that streaming is advisable. (Even in Victoria, where the proportion in favour of mixed classes is 71% for Item 8, the acceptance of streaming for reading is high.)

Item 9. (streaming advisable for reading)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	93	72	90	87	87	91	85
uncertain	2	7	3	5	5	3	2
disagree	5	21	7	8	8	6	13

It has already been noted that teachers are by no means unanimous in supporting the view that 'children have not been given a comprehensive education in English until they have come to appreciate English literature' (Item 64). Nearly a third of teachers disagree, and when they are questioned on the kind of material children should read, as they are in the following items, teachers are more likely to argue for quantity than quality.

Item 21. – A teacher should encourage children to read a few good quality books rather than large quantities of other literature.

Item 58. – A teacher should encourage children to read in great quantities, irrespective of the type of reading material.

However, for some teachers this stance does not preclude agreement with Item 4:

Item 4. – The study of selected pieces of writing followed by discussion will give children an appreciation of good writing.

Items 21 and 58 are not mutually exclusive, of course, and this is reflected in the patterns of response. Thus, the percentage of teachers in most states who would disagree with the first statement is generally larger than the percentage who would encourage children to read 'irrespective of the type of reading material':

Item 21. (encourage reading of a few good quality books)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	37	36	38	40	23	42	33
uncertain	7	11	3	7	19	18	4
disagree	56	53	59	53	58	40	63

Item 58. (encourage reading in quantity, irrespective of material)

agree	49	40	44	51	55	45	63
uncertain	9	10	7	5	5	7	5
disagree	42	50	49	44	40	48	32

There seems to be little relationship in teachers' minds between Item 4 and the two previous ones. A large majority of teachers support the study of selected pieces of writing, particularly in New South Wales. The proportion in Victoria is considerably smaller:

Item 4. (study of selected pieces of writing)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	86	61	82	67	77	79	73
uncertain	5	19	10	16	9	13	5
disagree	9	20	8	17	14	8	22

Teachers are by no means unanimous about the place of poetry in the curriculum, or how it should be treated. Certainly, a majority would give it special emphasis but the question of memorising leaves them much divided. The two relevant statements are:

Item 27. – The primary teacher should give a special emphasis to poetry in the curriculum.

Item 17. – Memorising at least a few poems each year helps children appreciate poetry.

There are only small differences between states on the first statement and these, because of the high proportion of uncertain responses in some states, are difficult to interpret:

Item 27. (special emphasis to poetry)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	60	61	60	51	56	58	66
uncertain	12	6	8	21	20	9	13
disagree	28	33	32	28	24	33	21

Although most of the between-state differences on Item 17 are also not large there is, nevertheless, a noticeable difference between the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales:

Item 17. (memorising helps appreciation of poetry)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	53	42	52	38	53	55	34
uncertain	7	7	8	12	15	13	2
disagree	40	51	40	50	32	32	64

Teachers, however, are fairly unanimous about reading stories to children.

Item 18. – Teachers of all primary grades should read stories to the class regularly.

While agreement accounts for at least 93% of all teachers, the degree of agreement is more often than not registered as 'strong' in Victoria and South Australia.

A group of three statements tested attitudes to library resources:

Item 15. – A comprehensive library is necessary to support effective English teaching.

Item 42. – English can be taught effectively even where library resources are poor.

Item 65. – The school library should be accessible to children at all times.

Not surprisingly, there is no strong disagreement about the need for a library. In fact, nearly all (about 90%) of respondents support the statement; more often than not agreement is strong, but nowhere so markedly as in the Australian Capital Territory. The percentages for the Territory are:

Item 15. (comprehensive library necessary)

	A.C.T.
agree strongly	67
agree	24
disagree	9

The pattern of response to Item 65 is very much the same, but in this case strong agreement is most marked in Victoria. The percentages for Victoria are:

Item 65. (library accessible at all times)

	Vic.
agree strongly	58
agree	34
uncertain	2
disagree	6

A minority of teachers, however, are sufficiently convinced of the need for a library to deny that English can be taught effectively with poor resources. This minority is largest in Queensland and smallest in South Australia:

Item 42. (effective English teaching even with poor resources)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	61	57	48	77	61	75	64
uncertain	8	11	9	11	17	6	7
disagree	31	32	43	12	22	19	29

Spelling, grammar, exercises and homework

Although most teachers agree that they should not bother too much about spelling in 'creative work' (Item 50), this does not mean that they do not teach spelling, as responses to the following two statements demonstrate.

Item 10. – Regular spelling exercises contribute little to the development of the child's language ability.

Item 20. – Dictation exercises are of doubtful value.

Teachers in the Australian Capital Territory are more often than not ready to agree with both statements, but in all the states nearly two-thirds of the teachers oppose the first statement and proportion is not much lower—occasionally even higher—for opposition to the second:

Item 10. (spelling exercises contribute little)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	35	35	24	34	27	29	54
uncertain	4	4	8	6	8	7	6
disagree	61	61	68	60	65	64	40
Item 20. (dictation exercises of doubtful value)							
agree	23	45	39	33	18	37	50
uncertain	15	4	5	9	9	13	5
disagree	62	51	56	58	73	50	45

Clearly nowhere are spelling and dictation exercises out of date.

What then is the attitude towards grammar,* as expressed in response to the following statements?

Item 6. – A teacher should provide regular classwork on common errors of usage.
Item 51. – The teaching of basic grammatical terms is necessary in the primary school.
Item 61. – The teaching of formal grammar cannot be justified in the primary school.

There is almost general agreement to the provision of 'regular classwork' on common errors and a large majority that favours the teaching of basic terminology. When the question is put bluntly, however, it produces an increase in uncertainty. Clear opposition to the teaching of grammar is strongest in the Australian Capital Territory and notably weak in both Western Australia and South Australia:

Item 6. (regular classwork on common errors)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	84	83	86	90	93	88	76
uncertain	4	3	5	4	1	3	2
disagree	12	14	9	6	6	9	22

Item 51. (basic grammatical terms necessary)

agree	68	62	72	83	79	74	63
uncertain	8	7	6	5	4	5	4
disagree	24	31	22	12	17	21	33

Item 61. (teaching of formal grammar not justified)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	13	24	21	8	6	15	38
uncertain	18	18	5	10	9	12	4
disagree	69	58	74	82	85	73	58

Two statements refer to homework:

Item 29. – Homework should not be given to primary children.
Item 62. – Children should be encouraged to prepare or finish work at home.

Only in Victoria is the minority against giving homework large and even here it is qualified by the response to Item 62. A preponderance of teachers in all other states is not prepared to abandon homework and in all states a large majority will encourage some work at home.

Item 29. (homework should not be given)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	12	31	17	14	13	5	12
uncertain	10	7	5	9	7	6	6
disagree	78	62	78	77	80	89	82

Item 62. (children encouraged to prepare or finish work at home)

agree	83	73	85	78	83	75	84
uncertain	4	6	6	7	8	13	8
disagree	13	21	9	15	9	12	8

Assessment

The question of assessment has already been discussed under the heading of 'Writing, imagination and correctness'. Most teachers do not believe that children's

* See also, items 34 and 44, under the heading of 'Writing, imagination and correctness'.

writing improves if all written work is given a mark, but they do agree that some written work should be formally assessed (see Items 25 and 59). They are asked, in Item 22, about their attitude to grade standards:

Item 22. – A primary teacher should have definite expectations of standards in each grade.

Their replies are more usually, in agreement with the statement, particularly in Tasmania:

Item 22. (definite expectations of grade standards)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	71	69	76	75	79	93	65
uncertain	4	5	5	7	5	3	7
disagree	25	26	19	18	16	4	28

In Item 32 the focus of assessment is shifted from the pupil's achievement to the teacher's effectiveness:

Item 32. – A teacher must test his pupils frequently to determine the effectiveness of his own teaching.

A majority in all states agrees with the statement, and the proposition obtains greatest support in Queensland:

Item 32. (test frequently to determine effectiveness)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	A.C.T.
agree	62	62	84	67	78	73	62
uncertain	8	9	2	1	4	4	4
disagree	30	29	14	32	18	23	34

Concluding remarks

On very few of the issues considered is it possible to find general agreement among primary teachers. On most of the issues there are differences of opinion. And, although the proportions from state to state might differ, differences of opinion as such are not illustrative of distinct state positions. For example, in all states there are teachers who wish to be free to plan their own courses, just as there are teachers who do not. If there are indications of changes in attitude—as taking, for example, the view that because language pervades the curriculum English should no longer be regarded as a subject—then these are sometimes only minority views. But this is not always so. Views on the pre-eminence of oral language, on its importance in language development and even on the need for children to talk in the classroom gain wide support. So also does the use of imaginative rather than 'practical' writing as the means of acquiring skill in the medium. Perhaps nowhere is a changed viewpoint more apparent than in the widespread support given to teacher autonomy in the planning of courses.

But while many teachers are prepared to adopt an almost radical stance on larger issues of general policy they are often less ready to abandon traditional practices. Adherence to regular, timetabled periods, to exercises in usage and in spelling, to the teaching of grammar and the setting of homework is still the norm.

English Curricula in Australia

Prepared by Diana Kelly, under the supervision of Diana Davis and Bill Renehan

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A INTRODUCTION

The paper aims to provide a stocktaking overview of the present state of English teaching in Australia. To this end, therefore, current curricula and teaching practices in the Australian states have been examined.

Although the terms of reference of the conference as a whole encompass only the period of compulsory schooling, it has been necessary also to make brief reference to material controlled by the Universities' Boards as the existence of terminal external examinations often influences the nature of junior secondary English courses.

Since a similar statement on current curricula and teaching practices in primary schools in each Australian state forms part of the report of the Curriculum Officers' Conference held at ACER in Melbourne in September 1971, it has been assumed that the position has not substantially altered in the intervening few months. Consequently the emphasis of this paper is on secondary schools.

In view of the volume of material which has formed the basis for this document, it has been necessary to organise the paper under the following broad general section headings for each state:

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Structure and Orientation of Courses
4. Current Approaches and Materials
5. Current Methods of Assessment
6. Summary

* A Supplement to *Education News*, April 1971. Department of Education and Science, Canberra.

Consonant with the aims of the paper, the material on the position of each state which follows has been able only to offer a number of pertinent generalisations. Since taken in isolation the curriculum documents provide only a very theoretical view of current teaching practice in each state, it has been necessary to supplement these by the impressions of Miss Diana Davis who visited a small sample of schools in each state. In each state she attempted to sample independent and state schools at each end of the status and academic prestige continuum. Although it is recognised that any attempt to generalise on the basis of such an inadequate sample of teaching practices is obviously both limited and unsatisfactory, it seemed to us more useful than no sample at all. In view of the essential nature of our stocktaking brief, the task of providing any kind of meaningful reflection of teaching practices around Australia from an analysis of curriculum documents alone seemed an impossible one. Hence we have used the samples of practice to supplement, expand and (where necessary) to modify the impression gained from the documents themselves.

It is hoped that, despite its limitations, the paper will serve to provide a working basis for discussion on current trends in curricula and teaching practice in Australia as reflected in the documents examined in each state. Changes in English teaching practice have been becoming manifest since the last decade. It is, however, only during the last five years that such conceptual and methodological changes have manifested themselves in any concerted manner. This is evidenced in the large scale revision of syllabus documents, the greater freedom prevalent in the new and essentially non-prescriptive documents, methods of assessment, publication of texts reflecting new approaches, the use of a variety of audio-visual aids and the organising of conferences and teacher-dialogues both on a regional and an inter-state basis during recent years. In fact, the present Unesco sponsored Seminar on the Teaching of English is itself a consequence of the general ferment and changes in attitude and approach.

B QUEENSLAND

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Until the Radford Report was tabled in 1970, responsibility for the syllabus for grades 8, 9 and 10 in Queensland was taken by the Board of Junior Secondary Studies, while the syllabus for grades 11 and 12 was the responsibility of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. The Radford Report recommended, however, that the five years of secondary education should be seen as a whole, rather than as two separate stages. Consequently, a single body, the Board of Secondary School Studies, has been appointed to replace the two boards mentioned above. This Board, in conjunction with the relevant subject committees, is to be responsible for drawing up new syllabuses for use both at the junior and senior secondary levels. At present it is working on the new syllabus for grades 8, 9 and 10, and to that end is considering working papers of the English Subject Advisory Committee.

In the absence of the new syllabus, however, 'the syllabuses issued in booklet form in 1966 or as amended by the Board of Junior Secondary Studies since then will be the Board-approved syllabuses at junior level, until variants recommended are approved'.[1] The information Bulletins, which are the responsibility of the Board of Secondary School Studies, bear testimony to this in nos 1 and 3.

The summary which follows relies chiefly on the published documents of the Board of Junior Secondary Studies, on the seven Information Bulletins published during 1971 by the Board of Secondary School Studies, and on the most recent draft paper of the English Subject Advisory Committee. While it is recognised that an analysis of pre-Radford Report syllabus documents may not adequately reflect current thinking on curriculum development, it is felt that, at this time, these papers nevertheless probably provide a more accurate insight into English teaching practice in Queensland than would those which are about to supplant them.

2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Board of Junior Secondary Studies syllabus of 1966 sets out the general aims proposed for the teaching of English at the Junior Secondary level (Grades 8, 9 and 10), as follows:

(a) To develop skill in the use of English as a means of expressing and comprehending thought.

(b) To foster an appreciation of English literature.[2]

As a means of furthering these aims, there is continued insistence on acceptable speech; correct, intelligible spoken English; regular practice in listening; and systematic training in written expression and reading.

Within various aspects of the English program, specific objectives are outlined. Under the heading of *Speaking & listening*, these are:

(a) To cultivate clear simple speech by the development of purity of vowels and clear articulation of consonants.

(b) To remove faulty speech habits and substitute correct ones.

(c) To make the child conscious of the need for clear, simple, expressive speech as a means of communication.

(d) To secure a pleasing tone; to develop clear and easy delivery; to help the child to enjoy speaking—and finally to give the child poise and confidence in social intercourse.[3]

Consistent with the emphasis on the communicative function of writing, the objectives for written English are those of lucidity, simplicity, naturalness, correctness, and precision of meaning. In this context the teaching of grammar is regarded as an aid to lucid and acceptable expression. The objectives for reading are that the student should comprehend and enjoy what he reads, and that his imagination should be stimulated. Vocabulary building, teaching of listening skills, and attention to reading fluency are regarded as furthering this aim. Through the study of literature it is hoped to develop the habit of reading and to foster literary taste. Such study is also seen as the means of introducing students to literature. The aims of teaching poetry are seen to be those of helping students to enjoy it, and of enriching their understanding of individual poems. The aim of teaching in drama is to provide students with the experience not only of acting but of 'bringing a play into being'; enjoyment of drama is considered to be of prime importance.[4]

Furthermore, 'teachers of the subject are asked to view themselves as playing a particularly important role', that of helping their students to see English as 'the main means towards self expression, self knowledge, imaginative order, understanding of the world, the possession of values, and a guide to conduct'.[5]

The Board of Senior Secondary School Studies' syllabus in English for grades 11 and 12 explicates the aims of the senior course in the following terms:

(a) To train the student to read accurately and with understanding over a reasonably wide range of material.

(b) To develop his ability to express himself in clear, vigorous, concise, appropriate English.

(c) To help him realise the enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from the adequate use of English, particularly from the reading of good writing.[6]

As a consequence of the Radford Report, and consonant with changed thinking about English in this state, there is in progress a complete reappraisal of the subject. The most recent draft paper of the English Subject Advisory Committee[7] offers a redefinition of secondary English courses in the following terms. The general aim is 'to promote the maturity of the student to the limit of his capacities'.[8] This is to be achieved by:

(1) Encouraging the natural enthusiasm, vitality, spontaneity, and originality of the student through active participation in language activities.

(2) Enriching the student's ideas, thoughts and feelings and developing his accurate perception of himself and the world around.

(3) Developing the student's ability to *express* his ideas, thoughts and feelings through language.

(4) Developing the student's ability to *communicate* his ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through language.

(5) Developing in the student skills which contribute to effective expression and communication.[9]

These aims focus the teacher's attention on the individual and the need to see the purpose of activities and experiences in terms of the fostering of personal development and fulfilment.

2.3 STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION OF COURSES

Traditionally in this state, separate syllabuses have catered for the two phases of schooling in the secondary school; the first of these has culminated in the Junior examination taken at the end of grade 10 and the second in the Senior examination at the end of grades 11 and 12. The Board of Junior Secondary Studies has provided a syllabus intended to cater for the stated aims of English teaching at the junior level (grades 8, 9 and 10) and the Board of Senior Secondary Studies has been concerned to implement its aims in the final two years.

It was, in fact, at the request of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies that the Radford committee was appointed to 'review the system of public examinations for Queensland secondary school students and to make recommendations for the assessment of students' achievements'.[10] The Radford Report advocated that the Board of Secondary Studies should still retain the role of providing a syllabus document, which would suggest a broad framework, with clearly stated objectives, and yet give ample scope for schools and teachers to offer their own courses.

The recommendations of this report have now been accepted and hold wide implications for the structure and content of syllabuses in this state. Moreover, acceptance of the recommended internal scheme of assessment to replace the public examinations has necessitated the framing of new curriculum documents.

Because of the time required to devise syllabuses in the form envisaged by the Radford Report, the junior syllabuses issued in booklet form in 1966, together with such amendments as have been made by the Board since then, will continue to be the approved syllabuses at junior level until such time as new documents have been prepared and approved. The existing 1966 syllabus delineates the central areas of English as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Within each of these areas, the syllabus has set up specific objectives with a corresponding commentary.

There is much concern with the need to equip the student with such qualities as clarity, conciseness, correctness and precision in a concerted attempt to facilitate his capacity to function successfully in society. There is an insistence on standards, on enabling students to reach an acceptable level. To this end, the syllabus recommends formal activities such as essay writing, letter writing, comprehension of prose passages, summarisation, construction of sentences, synthesis, correction of sentences, vocabulary exercises, and the study of selected poetry, prose and drama. The syllabus also provides for experiences in spoken English, where students are expected to engage in activities such as discussions, lecturettes, formal debates and forums, interviews, and prepared speeches. The dramatic activities which have been traditionally part of junior secondary English include those of 'miming, puppetry, short dramatisation with clear plot and strong characterisation, reading and acting one act plays, and broadcasting radio programs'.[11] Activities involving reading, reciting, choral speaking and listening are also recommended.

The activities of grades 8, 9 and 10 may not have been intended solely as a preparation for work to be covered in grades 11 and 12 culminating in the Senior examination. But this examination, although based specifically on the last two years of schooling, has inevitably cast its shadow on curricula and teaching practices in the junior forms. The fact that both the Junior and Senior examinations sought to test students' skills in similar fashion operated to entrench such skills in grades 8, 9 and 10 even more firmly in classroom practice. But since the Junior examination has already been abolished as a result of the Radford Report, and the Senior examination is to be discontinued after 1972, teachers should now be more free to innovate and to provide more meaningful and more varied experiences through English.

A recent draft paper which foreshadows the new curriculum document delineates those experiences and activities thought to be necessary for 'creating an environment conducive to learning', for providing varied and meaningful 'experience with language', for facilitating self-expression and social interaction through language, and for developing basic communication skills'.[12] This document will be in no way prescriptive; but it will provide a framework within which teachers can work, while leaving scope for their own initiative. A commentary provides an elaboration of the aims as specified and describes an environment suitable for the nurturance of desired objectives and skills. For instance, the commentary suggests that, 'in order to develop critical faculties, powers of discrimination and the ability to form and express personal views, frequent opportunities should be provided for the student to submit his personal views for group discussion and peer and self evaluation. An understanding of the form and intent of language in a variety of situations should be developed. Technical devices and terminology should be taught as they arise naturally out of a practical situation'.[13] The commentary makes patently clear the orientation and expectations of the new approach.

Already the challenges offered by these changes have been met in work such as Stewart and Doyle's *Actions and Reactions*, the first of a series of sourcebooks

for grade 8.[14] Pockets of innovation, where teachers are already exploring (and revelling in) this new spirit of freedom are to be found in a few state and independent high schools.

2.4 CURRENT APPROACHES AND MATERIALS

Very little is indicated in earlier Queensland syllabuses of teaching approaches which would be considered appropriate to meet the objectives specified either by the 1966 documents or the more recent draft paper by the English Advisory Committee. Nevertheless, perusal of the working syllabus documents of a few schools offers a clear indication of the current trend towards the use of a thematic approach throughout the Junior Secondary School.

In the absence of a detailed survey of a representative sample of schools, however, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which such approaches are actually used in the classroom. Certainly our brief sample ran the gamut from the subject master who dealt with a different aspect of English on a set day of the week for no better reason than the essentially pragmatic one that 'if they know they have poetry on Tuesdays, then they know to bring their poetry books on Tuesdays',[15] to the subject master who, overtly recognising that:

> The use of language for the purposes of life is . . . learning only by a rich and varied reading, writing, talking, listening . . .[16]

was prepared to allow his teachers to devise their own occasions for language use. The latter, however, was rare as many teachers found themselves unable to move outside the kind of teaching framework which ranged from the chalk, stalk and talk type of lesson to one which, though less formal, merely consisted of the dogged reading of one act plays. Even those schools where the thematic approach had precedence over more traditional teaching tended to be rather dogmatic about its implementation, as the following quotations from the documents prepared by subject masters for teachers in their departments of English will illustrate:

> English will be taught at grade nine level in 1972 by themes. There will be six units for each Semester. Actually, I have prepared seven themes of which you will choose six.[17]

> Grade 11 will begin with a theme on Australiana. Should any teacher feel the need to observe a demonstration lesson on thematic work, please see me, as this can be easily arranged.[18]

> The approach will be basically thematic . . .[19]

The Board of Secondary Studies, Information Bulletin No. 5, 1971, notes that all textbooks which previously were prescribed at both the Junior and Senior level are merely suggested possibilities for 1972. Although there is a clear statement that other texts may now be used instead of those formerly prescribed, this liberalisation is accompanied by the rider 'that since however there has been no variation in the nature of the work to be covered, there should be no change in the nature of the texts chosen'.[20]

Consequently schools, in selecting texts during this interim period, are obviously expected to be guided by past experience in terms of the particular needs of the course of study which they propose to adopt. It is noteworthy that the use of audio-visual material, wherever appropriate, is also specifically recommended.

The following textbooks, which are based on a thematic approach, are representative of those used in the more progressive of the limited range of schools visited in connection with the preparation of this paper:

Themes and Responses by Delves and Tickell[21]
Contact by Watts and Grono[22]
Conflict by Hacker, Learmonth and Robinson[23]
Sandals in One Hand by Boomer and Hood[24]

While the use of such texts is a hopeful sign, it must also be remembered that many teachers still seek the structured comfort of Allsopp and Hunt,[25] Ridout and McGregor,[26] or their counterparts. Actually the introduction of more progressive thematic sourcebooks appears to herald the spirit of the forthcoming curriculum and is consonant with an approach which seeks to provide a meaningful framework within which to foster individual maturity.

2.5 CURRENT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

The Junior public examination, taken at the end of grade ten, was discontinued after 1970. Instead, a similar certificate, under the control of a Moderating Committee, is awarded on the basis of school assessment. The Moderating Committee provides guidelines on methods of assessment, though it expresses wariness about encroaching on the freedom of individual schools in this matter.

Since the beginning of 1972, the Moderators 'assume availability of students' achievement records in grades 9 and 10 and (that teachers' assessments) will be based on what they consider the best information available about a student'.[27] This is not to imply, however, that the school's record of the student's previous achievement must be used *in any particular way* as the basis of assessment for the Junior Certificate. For example, schools are also advised to keep adequate samples of course work (e.g. question papers, assignments, representative samples of essays and answers), so that these can be offered for review to moderating groups.

An example of a program of assessment in use under the new system is provided in the fifth issue of the Information Bulletins of 1971,and points to the use of formal tests, assignments and informal marks given to oral English, administered at various times during the year. The seventh and final issue of the Information Bulletins for 1971, mentions that, in retrospect the system was considered to be reasonably successful in that teachers, freed from examination prescriptions, were able to use their own initiative to devise more relevant and appropriate English programs for the students in their classes.

The Radford Report, 1970, has suggested that after 1972 the Senior examination should also be replaced by a system of school-based assessments. Until such time this examination remains an external examination, controlled by the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. This examination, based specifically on the last two years of study, provides both a terminal School Certificate and the basis for selection to tertiary courses. In its present form, the examination in English consists of two three-hour papers and, although any explicit division between literature and expression is avoided, the first of the two papers tends to place more emphasis on the practical straightforward modes of expression than does the second which deals more directly with literary texts. However, with the expected changes in the mode of assessment at the senior level, this state should be able to look forward also to changes in the teaching and study of English in the senior secondary school.

2.6 SUMMARY

This section has attempted to gauge some of the wind of change, and its direction in the English curriculum in Queensland. These developments, potentially at least,

provide the basis for genuine progress in English teaching. The impetus for change comes directly from the Radford Report and from the subsequent decision to abandon public examinations for the Junior and Senior Certificates. In this context, the role played by Moderating Committees is obviously a crucial one.

The rate of change and the extent to which these new emphases will become effective in classrooms across this vast state remains an open question. The removal of prescription, the publication of new texts—particularly source books—and the provision of workshops and seminars by the English Teachers' Association are among the means by which it is hoped that this will be accomplished. The danger that some teachers, long used to a more highly structured syllabus, will look for more specific guidance, must not be ignored.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. Department of Education, *Syllabus in English*, Grades 8, 9 and 10, Brisbane, 1966, p. 1.
3. *Ibid*, p. 2.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 17 and 18.
5. Department of Education, *Syllabus in English Expression*, Grades 9 and 10, 1966, p. 2.
6. University of Queensland, *Matriculation Manual for 1971-72*, p. 50.
7. Private communication from a Curriculum Officer.
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9. *Ibid.*
10. Queensland Department of Education, Committee appointed to review the System of Public Examinations for Queensland Secondary School Students and to make Recommendations for the Assessment of Students' Achievements, *Report*, Brisbane, 1970 [i].
11. *Syllabus in English*, Grades 8, 9 and 10. Op cit, p. 5.
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27. Information Bulletin, No. 1, *op cit*, p. 4.

C New South Wales

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In New South Wales, within the six years of secondary schooling, the syllabus falls into two stages. In the first stage there is a process of gradual development from first form to an external school certificate examination at the end of fourth form. The second stage takes the process further until at the end of the sixth year students present for the Higher School Certificate Examination.

The two statutory boards responsible for curricula are the Secondary Schools' Board, and the Board of Senior School Studies. The former deals with the requirements of forms I-IV and the latter for those of forms V and VI.

The subject English is compulsory throughout the entire process of schooling. As with all subjects in N.S.W. provision is made for English to be taken at three levels differentiated according to the developing capacities of students; the appropriate level for each child is found by continual observation and guidance during the critical years.

The summary which follows relies chiefly on the following documents:

Secondary Schools Board: Circular memo no. 50 to School Principals: *1971 and 1972 School Certificate Examination. Subject of English: Statement of Objectives, Assessment Guide, Prescribed Texts and Examination Rules.*

Secondary Schools Board, Circular memo no. 36: *The Revised English Syllabus for Forms I-IV. Implementation in 1972-3.*

Secondary Schools Board: *Syllabus in English for Forms I-IV.*

Secondary Schools Board: Notes on the Syllabus in English, Forms I-IV, (1) *General*; (II) *Language;* (III) *Literature.*

Secondary Schools Board: *The Syllabus in English for Forms I-IV and Notes on the Syllabus: Additions to Bibliography and Minor Correction.*

Department of Education, for the Secondary Schools Board. English Examination Committee *Report on the 1970 School Certificate Examination.*

Department of Education: *School Certificate Examination, 1970. (English)* (a) *modified level*; (b) *ordinary level*; (c) *advanced level.*

Board of Senior School Studies: *English. Draft Syllabus Forms V and VI, Courses 1, 2 and 3.*

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.2.1. *Forms I-IV*

In some measure the syllabus in English for Forms I-IV might be read as providing little more than a philosophical rationale to guide teachers in the organisation of their courses. At the same time it establishes very firmly a view of responsibility for course design held by those who promulgate it:

> In stating the aims and objectives of English . . . the syllabus does not prescribe, even by implication, the details of selection and organisation of any English course. Within the broad framework of the syllabus, those responsible for course-planning are free to use their professional judgement to develop their own courses according to the needs of their pupils, and to evaluate their success.[1]

It does, however, make a number of assumptions about the nature of these courses.

> This syllabus assumes that English for twelve to sixteen year-olds should be an active pursuit: a matter of pupils developing competence by engaging in an abundance of purposeful language-activities, enjoyable because they are appropriate to needs, interests and capacities.[2]

and

> The syllabus emphasises integration of the various facets of English (so that), English-teaching and English-learning situations arise when language, for example a poem, is experienced . . . and this activity becomes a stimulus to further speaking and writing.[3]

A third assumption is that the syllabus will find expression in a large variety of forms differing from class to class, from teacher to teacher, from one occasion to another, but always reflecting the particular stage reached in the 'pupils' growth towards maturity'.[4]

The rationale proper consists of an exploration of two sets of relationships: at one level between what is called 'personal competence'[5] and the meaning, the form, and the value of a language event or situation and, at a second level, between competence (this 'grasp of meaning, form and values')[6] and those aspects of a language situation or event which the syllabus labels *the language* itself, *use* (or the particular mode or channel), and *context*. It then sets out under these three main headings (language, use, and context) a series of objectives dealing with such items as usage, vocabulary, style; listening, reading, etc.; and 'everyday communication',[7] and literature. The statements of 'objectives' are exemplified by the following:

> Listening: The objective is the development of listening skills in a variety of situations. This involves (for example) . . . ability to relate observation to listening, especially in situations such as drama, film and television where the visual aspect is significant.[8]

Or, for the objective labelled Literature:

> The objective is development of the ability to experience and respond to literature, including works which pupils themselves create (which involves, among other things) ability to express personal response to texts in a variety of ways; reflecting breadth, relevance and depth of experience; (and) reflecting achievement in English as a whole.[9]

The obvious danger with a syllabus that combines a high level of abstraction in rationale with a seemingly exhaustive list of objectives is that questions of emphasis or direction tend to be lost. In the refreshingly continuous prose of the commentary[10] which, together with a bibliography, accompanies the syllabus, there is some statement of emphasis and of direction.

Another helpful aspect of the commentary is that it places the syllabus in perspective in relation to its predecessors. It is expected that additional 'notes' in preparation will further assist this process of explicating the aims and objectives of English in Forms I-IV.

3.2.2 *Draft Syllabus for Forms V and VI*

Courses I and II provide syllabuses in both language and literature.
The aims of the language syllabuses are:

1. To increase competence in the appreciation and use of English in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
2. To develop understanding and appreciation of the nature of language and its significance in the life of the individual and society.
3. To establish sufficient knowledge of the English language in its development and structure to achieve the above objectives.[11]

In literature, the aims of the syllabuses are:

1. To develop and refine individual response to literature.
2. To develop ability to recognise, describe and assess qualities of thought and feeling expressed in various forms of literature.
3. To develop an understanding of the literature of other ages.[12]

> Course 3 is an integrated course in the reading, writing and speaking of English . . . The objectives of the course are to develop students' ability to understand and respond to good literature within the range of their competence and interests, and to improve their skills in comprehension and in oral and written expression.[13]

3.3 STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION OF COURSE

The Secondary Schools Board has recently adopted a revised English Syllabus for Forms I-IV, which differs very little from its first version, the Draft Syllabus of 1971. The revised syllabus replaces the existing syllabus at all levels of study in Forms I-IV from 1973. It is at the discretion of schools to implement this new syllabus in Forms I-III in 1972 but, in the interim, schools which do not wish to do so are free to use the Draft Syllabus and its commentary. There are notes to accompany the syllabus; these include a bibliography and general commentary, and further notes on the language and literature sections. Similar sets of notes for the guidance of teachers are in preparation on reading, listening and observing, speaking, writing and the media.

At this first stage, the syllabus documents seek to establish a framework within which the English teacher helps the child to use language in the context of various situations. The new syllabus, like the one that preceded it, is fundamentally directed towards 'understanding and expression in the spoken language and the written, with literature involving all of these'.[14] The new syllabus specifically disclaims as an objective an 'abstract knowledge of any formalised system of grammar' and asserts that its central focus is the development of practical competence of language in use.

In literature, too, there is little explicit concern with mastering some formal critical or historical system. Just as the new syllabus does not demand an absolute abstinence from any mention of grammatical terms, neither does it prohibit entirely reference to the canons and terms of literary criticism. What it does point out is that 'English is not constituted by such terms, ideas and information, but by pupils' personal experiences and responses in language, of which literature is a part'.[15] There is also much more emphasis on spoken English and on the various media of communication. The Assessment Guide for 1971-2, School Certificate Examination questions, and the prescribed texts for 1971-2 all serve to reinforce these trends.

Emphasis is on integration of the various facets of English: understanding and control of usage, vocabulary, structure, style, the development of skills in listening, reading, speaking and writing and an understanding of the use of language in everyday communication, communication in various media, literature and personal expression are all seen as closely inter-related aspects of the one study. 'Understanding others is as important (for pupils) as self expression; the spoken language as important as the written; and language and its uses and contexts should continually be attended to, together and not apart'.[16]

3.3.1 *The Final Two Years*

The Board of Senior School Studies details three senior English courses to cater for the range of ability and interest which are represented by the three levels: advanced, ordinary and modified. While the first and second of these cater for those who have tertiary aspirations in English, the modified level is intended to provide a valuable terminable course.

Both levels I and II see English as a unified course with four equal strands, poetry, the novel, drama and language. Level III is seen rather more as an 'expression course' and hence is less demanding than the other two.

For these two-year courses for the senior secondary forms, literature texts are merely recommended for fifth form study, but for sixth form they are prescribed. The syllabus contains not only a list of texts or topics but also an elaborate rationale for teaching at these levels. Form V is seen as a year of wide reading

whereas form VI concentrates on specific texts representative of different literary genres. For the language section, specific texts are not prescribed, but topics covering vocabulary, structure, history and semantics are recommended for the two year period.

Except for one university in N.S.W., English is also a compulsory subject for university entrance. Although courses I and II are oriented towards university studies, the actual provision of levels and the encouragement of personal response to experience and to literature hopefully lessens the domination of secondary courses by the requirements of universities.

3.4 CURRENT APPROACHES AND MATERIALS

The Form I-IV revised syllabus reflects a general reluctance to instruct teachers about how they might achieve their aims and objectives. At most, advice on teaching methods and appropriate aids is offered to teachers.

The syllabus underlines the need for aproaches which are exploratory rather than instructional:

> English is concerned with personal growth and response, and the development of abilities, rather than systematic knowledge about subject-matter.[17]

The syllabus (Forms I-IV) stresses the need to use different methods for different classes. A number of possible methods of organisation are suggested, for example, 'a traditional pattern of weekly lessons on various facets of English such as poetry, composition vocabulary' and the like; a topic approach, project work, a block of intensive work on skills such as basic or advanced reading; a unit of group work or a course based on a particular focus of interest such as drama. It is assumed that such methods are potentially able to satisfy the syllabus requirements, but it is not intended that a teacher should espouse any single method.

Although a recent article[18] on the teaching of English in N.S.W. acknowledges that most of the teaching methods used in schools are fairly orthodox, the author stresses that a wide reading approach and a creative approach of reading and writing are increasingly being used, as are integrated and thematic approaches, sometimes implemented through team teaching. This note of optimism should not, however, be permitted to stand unquestioned as it is freely admitted by others concerned with the teaching of English in N.S.W. that there are to some extent set attitudes to particular levels and the methods which should be used at each level. In senior forms, despite some imaginative handling of the syllabus, the pressure exerted by the goal of university entrance too often gives undue precedence to the lecture, prepared notes and other teacher directed methods at the expense of pupil initiative and exploration. Despite intimations to the contrary, however, there is still a great deal of scope for teachers to change existing approaches and to innovate.

In accordance with the shifting emphases and changes in beliefs and values illustrated by the new syllabus, textbook recommendations have also been revised. Where some texts and reading lists are still set (Forms IV and VI) these have been altered to reduce prescription and allow for more modern and varied reading and for mass media studies. Source books rather than course books are in use. Books such as *Come Down and Startle*, *Themes and Responses* and *Sandals in One Hand* are representative of the books being used increasingly by schools and teachers.

> The tendency is to move away from the notion of one book for one class for one year, not only in relation to source books but also in poetry.[19]

Resources of reading materials are being increased, varied and aided by various schemes such as the Textbook Subsidy Scheme. Much use is made of audio-visual

aids to broaden the range of material available for presenting and experiencing English.

3.5 CURRENT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

In New South Wales secondary students face two public examinations during the course of their schooling; the first, the School Certificate Examination, which is the responsibility of the Secondary Schools Board, is taken at the end of the first four years and is supplemented by assessments made internally by teachers. The Board of Senior School Studies is responsible for the last two years of secondary schooling and for the Higher School Certificate Examination held at their conclusion. Each of these assessment systems will be considered in turn.

The Assessment Guide provided by the Secondary Schools Board for the Schools Certificate Examination for 1971-2* was intended to assist schools in assessing each candidate's total attainment in English as validly and reliably as possible. The Board recognised that assessment of English can never be exhaustive, but can only sample the many skills and activities involved. It was suggested that the assessment of English should involve (a) Comprehension/Language (b) Expression (c) Literature, weighted approximately in the ratio 1:1:2. In Comprehension/Language work, classwork in reading and language contributed to the assessment. This might be supplemented by information gained from the utilisation of programmed material, laboratories or tests. Skills in comprehension and critical appreciation were also to be assessed orally through pupils' reading aloud and through discussions of samples of language. Both aural and reading comprehension were to be taken into account in the assessment process.

In the area of Expression, assessment of a student's ability to speak and write on general topics was to be based on written composition preceded by class discussion and completed as regular classwork. Further creative work (contributions to class or school magazines) might also be used for purposes of assessment. Formal and informal speech activities with emphasis on competence in communication was also to be taken into account.

The ability to respond to literature was to be assessed through regular assignment work, usually written. Class discussion of texts and wider reading, oral interpretation and participation in drama activities were also to provide basis for assessment. The use of *viva voce* testing in Literature was recommended.

The Board suggested that:

> the speech component be given approximately the same weighting as the written component throughout. This recommendation is made in recognition that when the School Assessment is combined in equal weighting with the External Examination, the eventual weighting of spoken English will become one quarter of the total.[20]

In assessing work at all levels, the 1970 Report on the School Certificate Examination emphasises that examiners are not concerned with questions of fact or with a 'right answer or an ideal/model answer' but rather that the main qualities of good work should be individuality of viewpoint and treatment. At all three levels the Examination papers themselves reflect these criteria and present material imaginatively and interestingly. The papers include questions of the multiple choice type; stimulus material drawn from newspapers (e.g. cartoons, advertisements) in order to test comprehension and language skills; and composition work stressing

* This is no longer the operating document for 1973.

the need for an individualised, personal opinion and a thorough knowledge of the work covered.

At the H.S.C. level, since courses are designed on the basis of two years of study, examination papers are designed in such a way that the whole course is open to testing.

3.6 SUMMARY

The recently revised secondary syllabuses, in a bid to liberalise English teaching in New South Wales, attempt to incorporate much recent thought about language learning and its use. Deliberately, they offer minimal guidance on details of selection and organisation, in this way it is hoped that teachers will use their initiative and professional judgment to innovate, and to help students explore the resources of language and literature rather than to subject them to formal and sterile instruction. This freedom has also been reflected in the public examinations which seek to encourage a freer style of writing and a more personal response to central questions. Despite the existence of external examinations in English in New South Wales, the existence of a dual system of evaluation does point to the day when external assessment, at the School Certificate level at least, may be replaced by continuous cumulative assessment.

Given the difficulty of responding in practice to the philosophical nature of the syllabus document, and given the geographical vastness of this state, the dissemination of ideas about innovation and freedom which characterise the best teaching in this state may not be as widespread nor as rapid as some would hope.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Secondary Schools Board: *Syllabus in English for Forms I-IV*, p. 3 (1971).
2. *Ibid*, p. 3.
3. *Ibid*, p. 4.
4. *Ibid*, p. 4.
5. *Ibid*, p. 5.
6. *Ibid*, p. 8.
7. *Ibid*, p. 13.
8. *Ibid*, p. 11.
9. *Ibid*, p. 15.
10. Secondary Schools Board: *The Syllabus in English for Forms I-IV and Notes on the Syllabus: General Bibliography and commentary* (1971).
11. Board of Senior School Studies: *English Draft Syllabus. Forms V and VI, Course 1, 2 and 3*, p. 12, (1971).
12. *Ibid*, p. 1.
13. *Ibid*, p. 16.
14. Secondary Schools Board, Circular memo No. 36: *The Revised English Sytlabus for Forms I-IV. Implementation in 1972-3* (1971).
15. *Syllabus in English for Forms I-IV, op cit*, p. 7.
16. *The Syllabus in English for Forms I-IV . . . General Bibliography and Commentary. Op cit*, p. 8 (1971).
17. Quoted by LITTLE, G. in the article, English in New South Wales in *English in Australia*, No. 15, January 1971, p. 19.
18. *Ibid*, p. 22.
19. *Report from the English Teachers' Association of New South Wales.* A submission to Unesco Seminar in Sydney, May 29 to June 2, 1972, p. 3.
20. Secondary Schools Board: Circular No. 50 to School Principals: *1971 and 1972 School Certificate Examination. Subject of English: Statement of Objectives, Assessment Guide, Prescribed Texts and Examination Rules*, p. 4.

D Tasmania

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this State, responsibility for syllabuses is taken by the Schools Board of Tasmania. For secondary classes, the only curriculum statements which exist are those contained in the School Certificate Manual and the Higher School Certificate Manual. The former document deals with the first four years of secondary schooling. During this first phase, English may be studied at three levels. The level III syllabus is designed for the child of more than average ability 'in his command of language and the critical study of literature'.[1] The level II syllabus is designed for the majority of students, while the level I course is designed for those students who are considered less able.

Since there is no external examination for School Certificate subjects, teachers and schools are allowed freedom to construct their own courses and to use the system of levels in accordance with their professional judgment and particular circumstances.

However,

> . . . . . certain areas of study for levels III and II are set down for the fourth year and certain texts are listed.[2]

In courses prepared for the least able (level I), the importance of spoken language is paramount, whereas in those intended for the most able, there is greater emphasis on written language. Though literature is an important component of all courses, close textual analysis and the study of particular literary genres is emphasised only in courses dealing with the more able.

The Higher School Certificate is awarded on the basis of an external examination at the end of either the fifth or sixth year of secondary education. There are three courses offered: English Literature, English Studies and Speech and Drama.

The following summary relies chiefly on the documents listed below:

The Schools Board of Tasmania: *School Certificate Manual for 1972.*
The Schools Board of Tasmania: *Handbook of H.S.C. Examinations.*
The Schools Board of Tasmania: *Higher School Certificate Manual for 1972.*
The Schools Board of Tasmania: *Regional Moderation Handbook 1970.*

4.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central focus for junior secondary school English in Tasmania is the study and use of language used 'in the richest possible variety of forms and activities suited to the capacities and circumstances of the student'.[3] The *School Certificate Manual* for 1972 explains the aims of the English syllabus in terms of the need to:

> foster in all students, in ways appropriate to different groups, such capacities and attainments as the following: clear and accurate expression, spoken and written; accurate and full comprehension of the spoken and written word; alertness to the various persuasive uses of language legitimate and illegitimate; delight in the imaginative stimulus provided by the various creative uses of language; a confident sense of the power of language to absorb, order and communicate experience.[4]

At the senior secondary level, the broad aims of the syllabus in English Literature at levels II and III are seen to be threefold. The syllabus seeks:

> to encourage on the student's part a real and personal response to individual works of literature of outstanding value in several fields; to develop his sympathy for the aims and demands of a wide range of literature and to give him some understanding of the relation of the works to a general historical and cultural context.[5]

The course covers three major forms of imaginative literature in English: poetry, drama and the novel.

The English Studies syllabuses aim at 'introducing students to representative areas in the range of English studies'. It offers a much more general course than English Literature and contains sections on 'vocabulary, contemporary usage (oral and written), English speech, modern approaches to grammar, expository writing, modern fiction and modern drama or modern poetry'.[6] The syllabus emphasises the importance of language study as it is the intention:

> that students should gain understanding and skill in specific areas and a sense of intellectual challenge of the language as a formal study.[7]

The Speech and Drama course on the other hand, is conceived as an ideal enrichment to existing English courses and is also envisaged as suitable preparation for students wishing to undertake tertiary study in the area.[8]

4.3 STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION OF COURSE

4.3.1 *The First Four Years*

In common with some other states, Tasmania attempts to cater for different kinds of students and their diverse needs by providing courses and assessments at three levels all of which are offered by most schools.

Despite internal assessment and the lack of examination prescription in the *High School Certificate Manual* of the Schools Board, schools are normally obliged to work within the terms of the printed syllabuses. Individual schools may apply however to the Board for approval of an alternative syllabus.

The 1972 syllabus is 'to be considered as an interim one for use during the transition from the pre-1969 Schools Board organisation to the new School Certificate'.[9] The structure, content and aims of the course are discussed in broad terms, at each level. At all levels, the basis of the syllabus consists of spoken language,* written language, and literature.

However, provision is also made for inclusion of elements such as film and television, newspapers, magazines and advertising so as to stimulate interest and broaden the scope of courses. The syllabus for level II discusses activities such as improvised drama, composition, prose, poetry and film. The syllabus lists literary texts and films recommended for study. At level III the course is set out under the two headings of language and literature. Under language it discusses, for example, the uses of passages for analysis and comprehension, and what is expected in the form of written and oral expression. Literature is seen to:

> culminate in the fourth year in the study of a Shakespearian play; a 19th century or 20th century novel; a selection of poetry . . . and [in] a study of at least two of the following units: film and T.V. drama; a modern play; a work of non-fiction; a selection of short stories; a selection of essays and/or prose works; a 19th or 20th century novel.[11]

Within each section the detailed requirements and a list of recommended texts and anthologies are provided.

During these four years, all students are offered a variety of activities all of which:

> finally cohere in the study and use of language—one's own and others', heard and spoken, read and written, formal and informal.[12]

* 'In general, the Level I English courses place somewhat heavier emphasis on spoken language than do Levels II and III, and [hence correspondingly] less emphasis on the critical analysis, especially in written form. of the set texts for study.'[10]

At the same time, the syllabus 'seeks to encourage innovation in source content and structure'. It is designed to allow teachers freedom to decide how the subject should be taught, and to select subject matter which they find appropriate to their purpose.

4.3.2 *The Final Two Years*

The Higher School Certificate Examination, taken at the end of either the fifth or sixth year, is an external one. At this level, English can be studied as three separate subjects: English Literature, English Studies, and Speech and Drama.

English Literature is offered at Level II, Level III Division I and, Level III proper. (Level III Division I is an introduction to Level III and not the first part of a two-year course.) Level II is offered as a Higher School Certificate subject for those who do not wish to matriculate. The English Literature syllabus is directed towards a close textual study of the set texts and 'embraces the three principal forms of imaginative literature in English: poetry, drama and the novel'.[13] Works studied range over the period from the 16th Century to the present day and sometimes include work from an earlier period and from American literature. The course at Level III, however, is very much academically oriented and intended for students specialising in the study of literature. Both courses study a common core of prescribed texts, though students at Level III have much more extensive lists of texts to read and are expected to do so at greater depth.

A similar pattern of organisation is followed with English Studies which is offered at Level III, Division I and at Level III.* The subject is also offered at Level II as a non-matriculation Higher Certificate subject. The English Studies syllabuses are directed towards introducing 'students to representative areas in the range of English studies, in ways appropriate to the different levels'.[14] Much of the emphasis of the subject is on oral expression and thus discussion and debate are seen as important activities. It is thus a natural consequence that oral work should be an integral element of the assessment.

Imaginative literature is also an important part of the course and is treated broadly and discursively. 'Language study is an important feature in all the syllabuses; while confined at Level I to applied and practical forms, at Levels II and III, it is introduced as a formal and systematic discipline in application to four major areas of linguistic study'.[15] The intention here is to give students 'a sense of the intellectual challenge of language, as formal study',[16] as well as giving them understanding and skills in specific areas.

Speech and Drama is offered at Level I, Level III, Division I, and Level III. Though accepted at each level for Higher School Certificate, the subject is not yet recognised for university entry in Tasmania. Examination is internal and has both practical and written components. This syllabus aims at 'giving students a general course in spoken English and drama which will contribute to personal development and serve as a basis for further study and experience in any of the electives which are offered'.[17] These electives are:

1. Study of Modern Methods of Oral Communication.
2. Public Speaking.
3. Drama.
4. Poetry Speaking.
5. Expressive Movement.[18]

* Students are allowed to count only one of English Literature III or English Studies III for matriculation purposes.

4.4 CURRENT APPROACHES AND MATERIALS

Since the individual development of children has become the basic aim for the teaching of English, a wide variety of methods is seen to be appropriate in the teaching of the syllabus in Forms I-IV. The School Certificate Manual states that:

> any methods will be proper which bring language alive for the students and assist them to develop their abilities in it.[19]

To this end, every possible use is to be made of both:

> natural and hand-made endowments of the area and community in which the school is set.[20]

These are to be tied in with other activities, as part of an integrated program. For the busy teacher, however, there is a danger that these 'natural . . . endowments' may tend to stimulate little more than recourse to the traditional children's party game 'Yes—No' imported into the classroom under the guise of 'oral English' or the dramatisation of the most sensational scene from a current film as the basis of a speech and drama lesson.

The emphasis, nevertheless, is on student activity in many different areas such as discussion, film-making, play production, and the role of the teacher has been formulated as that of a guide. Teachers, it is suggested, should use a balance of styles and methods appropriate to particular groups. 'Team teaching and small group activity are becoming common features of subject organisation'.[21]

The use of texts and materials in Tasmanian schools reflect changes in the courses which point to child-centred activity associating language, literature and other related areas. Book-hire schemes help the acquisition by schools of a wide variety of texts and this allows them to keep pace with course changes. 'The establishment of tape and record libraries, the use of film in teaching, the introduction of videotape machines'[22] and other visual aids are all gradually becoming more popular.

4.5 CURRENT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

4.5.1 *The First Four Years*

All assessments made during the first four years of secondary schooling are internal and are the responsibility of the school concerned. Through its moderation scheme, the Schools Board reviews and maintains the type and standard of accreditation. Since most schools provide courses at three levels (*vide* 4.1), assessments too are made at three levels.

The process of internal assessment allows for flexibility in the scope and content of courses. But consonant with the general aim of:

> involving a whole experience of language in vital relation to the particular situation of students and teachers,[23]

teachers are warned against the undermining of such work by fragmenting and/or compartmentalising the assessment process. Rather, evaluation:

> should represent the teacher's considered judgment of where the students have reached in their whole grasp of language in all its manifestations.[24]

Programs of assessment will be planned by each school, including tests, assignments and any other methods deemed effective in giving teachers and students an insight into the progress the students are making.

4.5.2 *The Final Two Years*

At the end of the 5th or 6th year of secondary education, however, students do sit for 'an external examination' controlled by the Schools Board. In the H.S.C. English Literature course, the subject is offered at two levels, II and III. At level II assessment will take the form of one three hour examination set out in four parts, each equally weighted. Part A will contain a series of compulsory questions aimed to test knowledge of the prescribed texts. Parts B, C and D will contain essay questions on poetry, drama, and the novel respectively. The level III Division 1 examination for 1972 will follow the same format.

Assessment in English Studies involves both oral and written work as essential elements of the syllabus at all levels. Since (with the exception of Level III) assessment is internal, much flexibility is possible in methods of evaluation. At Level III, however, students take 'a three-hour written external examination on two main areas of study',[25] language and literature. The literature section also includes an oral assessment. Testing procedures at this level follow the format evident in most academically oriented courses, where questions on 'English vocabulary, contemporary English usage, English speech, English syntax',[26] and on the literature segment of the course are included. The Speech and Drama examination will comprise a two-hour written paper and practical examination both of which will be assessed internally.

4.6 SUMMARY

The sole curriculum statements which exist for secondary classes in Tasmania are those published by the Schools Board in the *School Certificate Manual* and the *Higher School Certificate Manual*. The first four years are characterised by a lack of prescription where teachers are allowed the freedom to plan suitable courses as long as the 'end points' indicated by the *School Certificate Manual* are 'reached at the conclusion of a four-years' course'.[27] This freedom, together with the partial demise of external examinations, aligns conditions under which English is taught in Tasmania with those which obtain in most of the other states.

Although Tasmanian education derives its benefits from the possibility that progressive vision can reach all schools in the state with relative ease and swiftness, such ideas suffer from being implemented on too small a scale to afford educators sufficient scope to engage in genuine reality testing. Most teachers know, or know of, most other teachers in their subject area and there is not a large enough forum for debate—in terms both of absolute numbers of teachers and of divergence in philosophical bases. Although one must always be wary of large generalisations, the major continuum along which Tasmanian teachers of English range is that of commitment/effort. Many teachers tend to espouse progressive ideas with enthusiasm and energy while others retreat into the pedogogical mores of yesteryear rather from inertia than from firm conviction.

Tasmanian English teaching can be exciting but there is the ever present danger that the impetus generated by new ideas will dissipate because of the paucity of raw material through which to ferment.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Schools Board of Tasmania. *School Certificate Manual for 1972*, p. 59.
2. HORNER, J. C. *'A Description of English Teaching in Tasmania'* in *English in Australia*, No. 14, September 1970, p. 38.
3. School Certificate Manual for 1972. *Op cit*, p. 70.
4. *Ibid*, p. 70.

5. The Schools Board of Tasmania. *Higher School Certificate Manual for 1972*, p. 69.
6. Hobart Matriculation College Handbook, 1972, p. 10.
7. Higher School Certificate Manual for 1972. *Op cit*, p. 73.
8. The information in this section relies largely on the Hobart Matriculation College Handbook. *Op cit*, pp. 10-11.
9. School Certificate Manual for 1972. *Op cit*, p. 60.
10. *Ibid*, p. 59.
11. *Ibid*, pp. 67-68.
12. *Ibid*, p. 70.
13. Higher School Certificate Manual. *Op cit*, p. 69.
14. *Ibid*, p. 73.
15. *Ibid*, p. 73.
16. *Ibid*, p. 73.
17. *Ibid*, p. 165.
18. *Ibid*, p. 166.
19. School Certificate Manual. *Op cit*, p. 62.
20. *Ibid*, p. 62.
21. A submission by the Tasmanian Association for the Teaching of English to the Unesco Seminar in Sydney, May 29 to June 2, 1972, p. [i].
22. *Ibid*, p. [i].
23. School Certificate Manual. *Op cit*, p. 62.
24. *Ibid*, p. 62.
25. Higher School Certificate Manual. *Op cit*, p. 81.
26. *Ibid*, p. 81.
27. A submission by the Tasmanian Department of Education to the Unesco Seminar in Sydney, May 29 to June 2, 1972, p. 1.

E Victoria

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Victorian scene must be understood in the somewhat idiosyncratic context of the division of post primary education into secondary or high schools and technical schools. Each is a separate system with its own staffing and educational policies. English teaching in technical schools used to be seen in terms of functional literacy or in terms of watered down academic courses and it has only been in the last decade that those responsible for curriculum development in technical schools have accepted the challenge of forging curricula appropriate to the needs and concerns of their students. To a large extent this has necessitated a process of re-educating teachers and channelling their pedagogical energies and skills into a recognition that, although the possibilities latent in many of these children were quite different from those of their more academic peers in high schools, they were at least equally valid and potentially challenging and interesting to teachers.

High schools, on the other hand, have always been concerned with the academic process which has traditionally culminated in matriculation and university entrance. Although there was a public examination at Intermediate or fourth year level many schools were permitted to make internal rather than external assessments based on the prescribed syllabus. This had the effect of throwing a good deal of responsibility back on teachers, who were required to justify the standing of their courses and examinations in order to qualify to make internal rather than external assessments. Hence when the Intermediate examination was abolished very many teachers had had some experience of syllabus drafting for their own purposes—even though much of this had been within the framework prescribed by the Victorian Universities Schools Examination Board (V.U.S.E.B.).

Given this climate, then, those responsible for providing appropriate guidance for teachers in drafting their own syllabuses for Forms I-IV were convinced that

teachers did not require explicit assistance in defining aims and objectives appropriate to their courses at this level and, in fact, have stated that these are not the terms in which they perceive their role. Hence those concerned with curriculum development in secondary English have taken the stance that it is more appropriate for them to provide requisite advice and to stimulate teachers. This they have done in a series of deliberately ephemeral papers each of which takes as its focus a particular problem of discussion.

The secondary English curriculum documents are the responsibility of the V.U.S.E.B. and are prepared by the Board's Standing Committees. The Secondary English Syllabus Committee appointed by the Education Department is also responsible for producing a series of working papers for teachers seeking guidance at the junior secondary level.

In the Technical Schools Division of the Education Department, the Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools assumes responsibility for both the syllabus documents and the discussion papers.

The main documents produced by the Technical Schools Division are the *Suggested English Syllabus, Forms 1-3*, produced in 1967 and the *Leaving Technical Syllabus (1969/1970)* which in fact grows out of the former.

The following summary relies essentially on the documents listed below:

V.U.S.E.B. *Courses of Study, Forms I-IV.*

V.U.S.E.B. *Higher School Certificate Manual*, 1972.

Education Department. *Suggested English Syllabus*: Forms 1 to 3 (Technical Schools), Melbourne, 1967.

Education Department. *Forms IV-V Curriculum*: Technical Schools, 1970.

Victoria. Curriculum and Research Branch. Current Documents Relating to English in Technical Schools. 1971.

(a) *English: Another Language.*
(b) *The Poor Reader in the School.*
(c) *A Language Policy Across the Curriculum.*
(d) *A Guide to Thematic Texts.*
(e) *Drama in Technical Schools*—An Introductory Paper.
(f) *Studies in Classroom Practice*, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
(g) *Exchange*, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4.
(h) *Evaluation in English.*

Victoria. Curriculum and Research Branch. Current Documents Relating to English in Secondary Schools. 1971.

(a) *Literature in the Secondary School Curriculum.*
(b) The following *Secondary English Committee Papers*:
No. 1. *Preliminary Statement.*
No. 2. *Language in Schools.*
No. 3. *Sources of English Work in Schools: The Place of Experience.*
No. 4. *Discussion Paper: Correction of Students' Writing.*
No. 5. *Sources of English Work in Schools: Wide Reading.*
No. 6. *English and General Studies.*

4.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As was intimated in the introduction to this section, the technical division of post-primary education is distinguished by its consistently documented syllabus papers and the secondary division by the almost total absence of such material. Hence

the discussion of aims and objectives in this section derives largely from the Technical School papers although it is recognised that the V.U.S.E.B. *Courses of Study Forms I-IV* for high schools acknowledges that:

> The English Standing Committee of the Technical Schools Branch of the Education Department has prepared a syllabus which schools might find very useful.[1]

The basic document produced by the Technical Schools Branch asks for the fostering of:

> intellectual and emotional growth in the individual through successful purposive exercise of his powers and stimulating and appropriate tasks.[2]

It further adds that:

> Within this framework the aim is to develop an understanding, appreciation and respect for all aspects of language that will continue throughout adult life.[3]

The syllabus is based on certain fundamental considerations—mainly 'the needs of the community' which require people equipped to take an active role in a complex technological society; and also 'the needs of the individual' himself, in whom 'complete personal development',[4] is to be fostered. This personal development is seen as involving the possession of a 'body of skills and aptitudes'; being 'attuned to change', being able to think abstractly and creatively, being able to 'come to grips with his environment', being given the means and motivation 'to continue his education beyond his formal schooling' and being 'assist[ed] to gain maximum satisfaction from an increasingly affluent society'.[5] Within this framework a number of specific objectives are listed:

(1) The ability to read independently, with understanding.
(2) The ability to write effectively, for any purpose and to any audience.
(3) The ability to speak effectively for a specific purpose and to a specific audience.
(4) The ability to reason and to follow an argument.
(5) The ability to listen with comprehension.
(6) The ability to respond to literature and other forms of writing or speech and to discriminate between them.
(7) The ability to take part in activities which involve social interaction.
(8) The ability to evaluate influences to which the student is subject.[6]

Each of these objectives is elaborated in terms of 'general considerations, and their application' in which a large number of suggested activities and teaching practices are listed.

It is the absence of such officially published material or its relative unimportance in the eyes of teachers that characterises the teaching of English in the majority of secondary schools. To say this is not to ignore the existence of two regularly published documents, the V.U.S.E.B. *Higher School Certificate Manual* and its *Courses of Study, Forms I-IV* which provides a neatly bound set of suggestions for teachers.

These documents, which reflect the need to describe expectations if not prescribe requirements for the Higher School Certificate taken by those students who stay at school to Form six, might be seen as the vestigial trace of public examination imposition on secondary school courses. Given, however, that the Higher School Certificate Examination in the compulsory subject, English Expression, is becoming increasingly content free, its restrictive effect on classroom practice is minimal.

The V.U.S.E.B. (H.S.C.) handbook states that H.S.C. Expression:

> aims to develop the student's ability to read more rewardingly, to think and talk more cogently, to write more clearly, relevantly and creatively—and, in the process, to broaden and enrich his awareness of the world.[7]

Emphasis is placed on fostering the intellectual and emotional growth of the individual and on enabling him to cope with and function in society.

The H.S.C. English literature course is heavily prescribed and its examination is geared towards the selection of successful candidates for subsequent tertiary study of English.

5.3 STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION OF COURSES

It is difficult to talk in general terms of the structure and content of syllabuses in this state as courses here show a wide variation. Unlike New South Wales, for instance, centralised planning of courses is disappearing altogether from schools in Victoria. All high schools have been allowed the freedom to plan their own curricula and some technical schools have developed quite individual programs. In fact, in many schools in Victoria, English as a separate subject is not taught under that name at all. Rather, English and its activities are included in a general program of studies variously called Humanities or General Studies, Integrated Studies or the like, the objectives of which are highly interdependent while at the same time being independent of any particular set of specifiable content.

The objectives of English teaching, to provide students with opportunities to read, write and speak and to relate literature to their own experience and needs are set out in the Technical Schools Branch *Suggested English Syllabus Forms 1-3* in terms of 'general considerations and application', through which a large number of suggested activities and teaching practices are listed. But the teacher in the Technical School is given the freedom to organise the form of his English Program within the context of the general guidelines offered by the syllabus. What the syllabus does stipulate, however, is that no single text is adequate for class use and that neither grammatical exercises nor spelling drills are desirable classroom practices.

In 1968, the V.U.S.E.B.'s Standing Committee, in conjunction with an English Syllabus Committee appointed by the Education Department, was given the task of examining English courses for the first four years of secondary schooling. Breaking with tradition, it decided not to issue a curriculum document as such, but rather to produce a series of short discussion papers, which could be read either independently or in conjunction with the earlier documents published by the V.U.S.E.B. for 1st-4th form and the departmental courses for 1st-3rd form. Their authors see the purpose of these papers as being to stimulate ideas on course organisation and content, and they are specifically concerned with areas or issues (e.g. the correction of student writing, or ways in which to integrate English into a General Studies program) where some controversy could be exposed. The papers also provide something of the theoretical background on which newer teaching practices are based, as well as providing instances of some ways in which such practices might be implemented in schools.

The authors of these papers, the Secondary English Committee, stress the need for the following activities to be incorporated in English teaching: the study of literature; wide reading; creative writing; experience of drama, film, theatre and television. 'Discussion—in the forms of talking, arguing, interrupting, asking, explaining, chiding, persuading, criticising, joking—is seen as basic to most of the English class'.[8]

The V.U.S.E.B., despite the fact that since 1968 courses of study have been the responsibility of schools, has 'agreed to continue to publish Courses of Study for the first four years of the secondary school, [an outline which] will from time to time, [be reviewed]'.[9] These however are merely to guide those who seek assistance 'and are neither prescriptive nor mandatory'.[10]

At the same time (1968) the Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools produced similar discussion papers, catering for teachers' needs, together with six *Studies in Classroom Practice*. As the title suggests, these give actual instances of what is happening in some classrooms around the state.

Schools in Victoria now have freedom to determine their own courses and their own standards for the first four and, in many schools, for the first five years of the secondary course. In practice, however, many schools frame their courses with the thought in mind that their students may eventually have to face public examinations in English for the Higher School Certificate. Since English Expression is a compulsory Matriculation subject, it is obvious that the public examination continues to wield some influence on teaching practice. The requirements for this examination, however, have undergone considerable change, and the emphasis is now less academic and focusses on testing in a:

> number of integrated ways the student's ability to read, think and communicate. The prescribed books are offered not as a body of knowledge, nor as the 'content' of the course. Rather, they are offered as the basis for a course intended to engage students in the activities of reading, thinking, discussing and writing apart from catering for students' interest.[11]

5.4 APPROACHES AND MATERIALS CURRENTLY USED

While there might be found a number of statements of intent, freedom to organise and execute courses within this context has, since the demise of the Intermediate Certificate Examination in 1967, been in the hands of teachers.

Although either a traditional or a thematic approach is acceptable it is generally allowed that the following activities should be part of the English course: wide reading, creative writing, study of literature, the experience of drama, and a study of theatre, film and television. Encouragement is given to the use of a wide range of situations and technique.

While the teaching of English is characterised by variety, attempts to avoid a piecemeal approach are evident in the growth of the General Studies curriculum, where much of the work revolves around a particular theme or topic. Team-teaching, as a regular feature of work in General Studies, offers further evidence of the trend towards the integration of activities within a meaningful context.

Wide reading programs exert much influence in some Victorian classrooms and are often used as the basis for the entire curriculum. The impact of this has also been felt at the H.S.C. level where the Expression paper now centres around extensive reading rather than the intensive study of one or two books. Although the presence of 'creative writing', film and drama courses and the like are also features of the English curriculum, and bear testimony to the diversity of methods used in many classrooms, the picture, however, would be not only incomplete but also inaccurate if it were not qualified.

In many Victorian classrooms, the compartmentalised approach to English still predominates. Separate periods are allocated to specific activities. Language texts abounding with vocabulary exercises, straitjacketed rather than free writing tasks, reading of scripted plays around the class rather than creative drama, rote

learning of spelling in lists, indoctrination in the tenets of traditional grammar, all these still characterise many Victorian classrooms.

The almost complete autonomy of teachers in Victoria means that the choice of textbooks is largely a matter of individual taste on the part of teachers and schools. For example, the Leaving Technical Schools syllabus document, 1969, recommends many books but prescribes none. The essential aim, though, is to build up as wide a range of class reference material as funds will permit. The policy of the Technical Schools Standing Committee is consonant with that generally held by the profession.

In 1971, a draft paper entitled 'A Guide to Thematic Texts',[12] incorporating some suggestions from teachers, was prepared and distributed to schools by the Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools. Various course books are cited and grouped according to their suitability for use in the lower, middle, and upper secondary school. Some of the books suggested as being fairly widely in use are:

Themes and Responses 1, 2 and 3 .. Delves and Tickell[13]
English Parts 1, 2 and 3 .. .. Hannan *et al.*[14]
Group Activity Topics .. .. Hansen (ed)[15]
The Tiger and the Rose .. .. Hansen (ed)[16]

Despite the abundance of printed material relevant to English, many schools and teachers still rely on books which have long outlived their usefulness and it is as though a breakdown of communication has occurred between those responsible for the abundance of published material and those actually in the field but ill equipped to use it.

5.5 CURRENT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

5.5.1 *The First Stage*

During the first five years of secondary schooling, assessment for most schools administered by the Secondary Division is internal. The pattern is the same in Technical Schools except that a proportion of the evaluation for Leaving Certificate is based on an external paper.

The Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools devotes much time to the discussion of assessment and evaluation. In reference to school assessments it is stressed that any evaluation can only be approximate and should be closely linked to the objectives of the syllabus. The use of annual, bi-annual or terminal examinations is seen as incompatible with the syllabus objectives of English in Forms 1-3. Attempts to conduct a single test covering most aspects of the course are actively discouraged. Since the syllabus is concerned with individual progress, rather than with arbitrary standards of performance, the terms 'pass' and 'fail' have no relevance to the syllabus. As part of the process children are encouraged to evaluate their own work in the context of its communicative function.

Evaluation is seen as serving three purposes: 'diagnosis, method estimation, and determination of progress'.[17] The discussion paper of the Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools, *Evaluation in English* suggests: (contrary to the earlier document, *Suggested English Syllabus, Form 1-3*) that a statement about pupil progress should not be seen in terms of a letter or a grade, but should be an:

> accurate and precise written statement which refers to the student's own present strengths and weaknesses, perhaps in relation to past performances.[18]

For example,

> Reading is to be assessed in terms of:
>
> (a) at what level the child is reading, and standardised tests are seen to be useful at lower levels,
>
> (b) how willing the child is to read.[19]

There will be very little actual 'testing'; the type of information recorded might appear to be anecdotal but it will have the virtue of being continuous and cumulative. In evaluating written work, the teacher is both evaluator and audience, and consequently must be seen to be sympathetic. Progress can be best assessed by keeping a cumulative file of the child's 'current written language behaviour'[20] and by making notes and comments upon it.

Oral language behaviour is also important and a record of relevant observations and comments is to be kept; such observations may be made in two types of situations: (a) informal conversation; (b) formal, prepared work. The chief criterion for assessment here is the success with which the child communicates.

Evaluation of listening ability must of necessity be indirect; 'since there is no observable behaviour that can be noted as "listening", any statement of listening behaviour made about a student, is an inference based on behaviour other than listening'.[21] The teacher should however ensure that the child is able to hear efficiently.

> 'Direct evaluation of the other objectives of the Forms 1-3 syllabus is seen to be somewhat more difficult . . . as the performance of the students will be noted in terms of the objectives discussed above. To record anecdotal evidence about each student's behaviour when it would seem that such behaviour indicates some attainment, or a lack of it, in a particular objective is regarded as profitable. When making judgments, [therefore], about what a child writes or says, content is a relevant and important factor in evaluating the quality of communication'.[22]

Thus, the teacher's role is essentially that of recorder of information rather than assessor of standards. The process of reporting to parents might require that some but not necessarily all of this information should be filed for ready access in the school.

At the Leaving Certificate level in technical schools, assessment is still partly external. This is soon to be discontinued. It has taken the form of a three hour paper that was given equal weight with work and tests completed during the year. Each school determines its own form of internal assessment, and details of which it then submits to the Education Department.

At sixth form level in high schools both Higher School Certificate Expression and Literature are assessed by means of one 3-hour written examination. The former examination is not concerned with testing separate skills in isolation from each other.

> The form of the paper will vary from year to year, but its function is to test in a number of integrated ways the student's ability to read, think and communicate.[23]

5.6 SUMMARY

With the almost total disappearance of centrally planned courses from Victorian schools, increasing demands are thus being made on the initiative of teachers who now have sole responsibility for planning their own curricula. The result is that in many schools there can be found the gamut of approaches to the teaching of English.

In a concerted effort to make English more meaningful to students, both technical and high schools have made considerable progress towards effective teaching of English often within the framework of a general studies program or its variants. Such a trend towards integration may well seem inconsistent to those who view the dual Victorian system from outside, or indeed to those children who are channelled into its various artefacts. It might even be that those whose responsibility it is to consider educational innovation in the State of Victoria, ought to be at least as much concerned with the educational advantages of a single post-primary system as those of a single area of study within that system.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board. *Courses of Study Forms I-IV*, 1971, p. 68.
2. Education Department. Technical Schools Branch. *Suggested English Syllabus: Forms 1-3.* Melbourne, 1967, p. 3.
3. *Ibid*, p. 3.
4. *Ibid*, p. 2.
5. *Ibid* p. 2.
6. *Ibid*, p. 3.
7. The Victorian Universities and Schools Examinations Board. *Handbook of Directions and Prescriptions* for 1972. School Leaving Examination. Higher School Certificate Examination, 1971, p. 401.
8. Education Department. Secondary English Committee. *English in Secondary Schools, Paper No. 1—Preliminary Statement.* Curriculum and Research Branch. ES 1, 1969, p. 3.
9. V.U.S.E.B. *Courses of Study Forms I-IV. Op cit.* Introduction p. [i].
10. *Ibid*, p. [i].
11. V.U.S.E.B. *Handbook of Directions and Prescriptions for 1972. Op cit*, p. 401.
12. Education Department. Curriculum and Research Branch. Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools. *A Guide to Thematic Texts*, 1971.
13. DELVES, A. R. AND TICKELL, W. G. *Themes and Responses*, 1, 2 and 3 (Cassell).
14. HANNAN, W., HANNAN, L. M. AND ALLINSON, A. A. *English, Parts 1, 2 and 3* (Cheshire).
15. HANSEN, I. V. (ed), *Group Activity Topics* (Nelson).
16. HANSEN, I. V. *The Tiger and the Rose* (O.U.P.).
17. Education Department. Syllabus Information Circular Technical Schools English ET2/26. *Evaluation in English.* Prepared by the Standing Committee for English in Technical Schools. Curriculum and Research Branch, 1969, ET 2/69, p. 2.
18. *Ibid*, p. 3.
19. *Ibid*, p. 4.
20. *Ibid*, p. 4.
21. *Ibid*, p. 6.
22. *Ibid*, p. 7.
23. V.U.S.E.B. *Handbook of Directions and Prescriptions for 1972. Op cit*, p. 402.

F Western Australia

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Western Australia there are five years of secondary schooling, which is organised into two distinct phases. The principal bodies responsible for the syllabus for the junior secondary school, comprising first, second and third years, are the Board of Secondary Education, the English Syllabus Committee and the Curriculum Branch. All students during these years of schooling undertake Achievement Certificate English courses as part of the Achievement Certificate program. The program is based on the assumption that students entering first year can be identified in terms of three levels of English ability: Advanced, Intermediate and Basic. Students are assigned to levels on the basis of tests in comprehension and written expression

taken early in first year. Teachers within schools are then responsible for deciding the particular level at which a student will take English. First introduced in 1969, most schools (with the exception of a couple of independent schools) have now adopted the Achievement Certificate program.

Leaving English, taken by fourth and fifth year students, is very largely a wide reading course, but much emphasis also is laid on acquiring skill in a variety of different kinds of writing. The Syllabus Committee of the Public Examinations Board of the University of W.A. is responsible for the Leaving English syllabus. The Leaving and Matriculation English Literature syllabuses are also their responsibility. These latter courses clearly reflect literature studies at the University of Western Australia both in content and desired skills.

The summary which follows relies chiefly on these documents:

W.A. Education Department *Secondary school curriculum: Syllabus in reading*, Perth, 1968.

W.A. Education Department *Achievement certificate course: First year English, Teachers' guide*. Rev. ed. Perth, 1970.

W.A. Education Department *Achievement certificate: Second year English, Teacher's guide*. Rev. ed. Perth, 1971.

W.A. Education Department *Achievement certificate course: Third year English, Teachers' guide*. Rev. ed. Perth, 1972.

W.A. Education Department *Achievement certificate courses*, Perth, 1972.

The University of Western Australia, *Manual of Public Examinations*, 1971.

6.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

6.2.1 *The First Three Years*

The Western Australian Achievement Certificate Course proposes two broad aims of teaching English. The first is:

> to give the student, through literature and discussion, an enriched and deeper understanding of his own experience, promote his effective participation in the world in which he lives and his enjoyment of it, and develop his sensitivity and imagination.[1]

The second aims 'to develop the student's powers of communication, his ability to observe, think, listen, speak and write'.[2]

It is agreed that the pursuit of these aims will lead to the realisation of long-term goals relating to the personal and social development of the individual. The study of English is directed thus towards the development in each child of 'a thoughtful attitude on questions of personal behaviour and social responsibility', 'his understanding and tolerance of others', 'his critical attitude towards change' and 'readiness to accept and control this process', 'skills of self education' in terms of 'individual differences of background, ability, interests and maturity'.[3]

It is also intended that English should be taught within a framework which liberalises classroom practice and takes into account the individual potential of students. The Second and Third Year Guides of the Achievement Certificate Course point out that in all the various activities connected with English, both teacher and student should be concerned with the achievement of acceptable standards. 'Such activities include reading (in the widest sense), writing and discussion (which includes listening, thinking and speaking) and associated activities such as individual research, participation in dramatic and other group activities.'[4] With each of these

activities, the teacher's central aim should be to encourage the individual to achieve at the highest level of which he is capable.

Whilst emphasis so far has been on performance in accordance with individual abilities, an additional assumption is that the teacher should also set himself standards and goals. This means modifying the core activities of reading, writing, listening, speaking and group activity to allow for a range of achievement appropriate to class level and the student's intellectual potential. The implication here is that there is some sense in which teachers have access to standards.

> It is inherent in the Achievement Certificate concept and planning that this knowledge of standards should, through training and experience, become part of the professional equipment of teachers.[5]

6.2.2 *The Final Two Years*

The P.E.B. Leaving English syllabus, which is regarded as a two-year course, aims 'to develop in students the ability to write English effectively and to read English with understanding and appreciation'.[6] 'The syllabus is based on the assumption that good readers make good writers': consequently the prescribed reading is central to the course. The aims of the reading course are to extend the interests of students, to interest candidates in techniques of writing, and to promote an attitude of critical awareness in candidates. The prime aim of the composition course is to 'develop in students the ability to write effective English'.[7] It is stressed that 'at all times, students should be given the stimulus to write, and a sense of the audience for which they write'.[8] The comprehension and comment segment of the syllabus deals with comprehension and discussion; the intention thereby is to develop in students an appreciation of the diverse uses of language.

6.3 STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION OF COURSE

In this State, terminal examinations have traditionally taken place in the 3rd and 5th years of secondary school and courses are thus characteristically organised for the lower and middle secondary school (the first three years) and for the upper secondary school (the fourth and fifth years). In 1970 the third year examination was replaced by an Achievement Certificate program based mainly on internal assessment by individual schools and available at three levels designed to cater for individual differences: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. The rationale for the course argues that English 'must be freed from that artificial division of a continuous course into segments and isolated skills',[9] often encouraged by formal examinations. It is recognised that English is:

> more than a technique of communication, more than a body of standardised procedures, measurable skills and textual information.[10]

It emphasises that English courses should be based on the 'needs of the students rather than on a body of information to be learned, remembered and tested'.[11]

To assist in the plannning of courses, Teachers Guides for 1st, 2nd and 3rd year respectively have been prepared. With their insistence on relating the work in English to the student's own experience, their recognition of individual differences, their opposition to the fragmentation of English courses and their reduction in the art of formal testing, these guides 'introduce an approach which incorporates recent thinking about the teaching of English'.[12] The guides work on the principle that, although every assistance is available if needed, teachers must plan their own courses and develop their own themes, exercises and activities. The role of oral English is strongly emphasised, particularly as it provides the teacher with 'the

most direct contact with the student's state of mind'.[13] The guides reflect the Western Australian commitment to an approach which includes discussion, wide reading, personal experience of students, and much writing.

The new style of text, which is seminal to the course, is called the *source book*. This is fundamentally a collection of passages to act as a stimulus for discussion, writing and further reading. Typically, the material is grouped under thematic headings. It is believed that such activities as are suggested in source books serve better to develop the fluent expression of students' ideas in both speaking and writing than do isolated exercises in composition, vocabulary, grammar and usage. Yet the guides do not insist that language exercises are to be excluded entirely; it is conceded that they may be used to practise specific techniques, for example, the development of a variety of sentence openings. Student efforts, however, should concentrate on generating, discussing and organising ideas in both speech and writing.

In response to numerous requests from teachers for such material, the guides also contain sample programs and suggestions as to how these may be implemented in the classroom. Within the suggested programs there is a strong emphasis on drama and improvisation as creative activities. Possible ways of treating literary study, discussion, writing, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage, and reasoning are also included. Finally, each guide provides a list of suggested source books and discusses the general principles and approaches advanced by them and their applicability to the various levels.

In the upper secondary school, Leaving English is designed towards a terminal secondary school examination, rather than to the requirements of the university. A pass in Leaving English, however, is essential for normal matriculation and for entry to most tertiary institutions and many occupations.

The syllabus is characterised by heterogeneity of recommended texts, freedom to select supplementary or alternative texts, and an examination which is designed to test more than mere factual knowledge. At the basis of all this lies the rationale that wide reading will achieve the course's aims of 'writing English effectively and reading with understanding and appreciation'.[14]

Leaving English Literature, now a separate optional subject, is designed to develop in students an appreciation of major literary forms in English; in fact its emphases closely reflect those of academically oriented university courses. Matriculation English Literature which requires separate examination is based on the Leaving Literature syllabus but attempts to measure, in addition, qualities assumed to be predictive of university success.

6.4 CURRENT APPROACHES AND MATERIALS

6.4.1 *The First Three Years*

Since the liberation of junior secondary school English from the restrictions imposed by public examination syllabuses and the introduction of the Achievement Certificate courses, major changes in teaching methods materials have occurred. These have, for the most part, tended to be revolutionary rather than simply evolutionary because:

> In implementing the aims and objectives [of the Achievement Certificate], schools have rejected the fragmentary approach to English encouraged by the prescriptive nature of the Junior Certificate Examination. This has meant the almost complete rejection of the text books of comprehension and language exercises which have had a significant place in most English courses since the nineteen thirties . . .

> Schools now endeavour to integrate all aspects of an English course, and relate them closely to the student's own experience.[15]

Source books, in which the material is often grouped under thematic headings, are typically used by teachers who look to such collections for a starting point or stimulus for discussion, writing and further reading. Frequently the English program is based upon themes chosen for their relevance and appropriateness to the experience of a particular group of students, and methodological approaches are oriented towards the development of communication through a broad spectrum of activities including creative drama, listening, film appreciation, and spoken English.

Discussion of works of literature is expected to play a dominant role in the development of communication. Literary works are thus selected to give the experiences of students a meaningful focus in discussion sessions, and to widen the student's awareness and understanding both of his own experience and that of others. It is felt that if stimulus material is carefully chosen, 'the attitudes of various people to [an] experience are likely to be brought together—attitudes expressed through art, photography, writing or speaking—and explored by the students and teacher.[16]

The source book approach to the teaching of English at junior secondary level is quite consistent with the principles of the Achievement Certificate in terms of its flexibility and the opportunities it affords for initiative and inventiveness in the use of materials and methods. The guides point out that, although the approach may not be radical, the availability of a considerable range of texts based on this approach and a widespread adoption of it in Western Australia reflects major methodological innovation.

While most Western Australian schools have accepted the Achievement Certificate courses and the thematic source book oriented approach which underpins much of its fundamental philosophy, the fact that schools are free to design their own programs in terms of their resources and the needs of their students means that there are (potentially at least) as many courses and methodologies as there are teachers and schools. This means that, although a large proportion of teachers have espoused thematic approaches with vigour, there are many who simply see the new approach as a different way of organising what they have always done in their English programs. Though such teachers express enthusiasm about the 'free and varied' program that results from the new courses and approaches, some at least hark back to the days when, in their terms, rigour rather than vigour determined the structure of the course!

Yet the danger of becoming too enmeshed in themes is recognised by those responsible for drafting the guides; teachers are advised that it may be wise to interrupt the thematic program and to devote the occasional two week segment to film study, the intensive analysis of a novel, or the production of a play.

6.4.2 *The Final Two Years*

For those pupils who remain at school after the Achievement Certificate years, it is suggested that, within the framework of the prescribed syllabus, 'the teacher's approach should vary with the text, the stage of the student's development and the composition of the class. Students are to be encouraged to discuss their own responses, to examine style, tone and thought; the study of the qualities of the literature to be studied is emphasised, and reading and discussion of texts are to be followed up by related written exercises for the students'.[17] A wide reading approach which extends beyond the minimum requirements described in the manual is advocated by many schools.

6.5 CURRENT METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

With the introduction of the Achievement Certificate, Western Australia has seen 'the disappearance of the Junior Certificate Examination and also of the annual and terminal school examinations in the old sense'.[18] Throughout the course, evaluation of the students achievement is to depend on the normal day-to-day activities in the English program. Allocation of students to levels begins with standardised testing at first year entry. The results from each school are then used to suggest percentages appropriate to each level for that particular school. Within each school the results of such testing, together with any other methods considered appropriate by the school, are used to allocate students. This is usually undertaken by the end of the first six weeks of Term I. It is understood, of course, that a student's allocation to a particular level is to be held under constant review and that mobility is not only possible but desirable. Within individual schools, evaluation is intended to recognise the specific interpretation of the aims of the subject reflected in the courses of individual teachers. Although some senior teachers are concerned to equate standards across classes, within their own school, finally it is the class teacher who is responsible for the assessment of the individual child.

The typical program of assessment then, comprises a continuous and cumulative record of teacher evaluations of a student's work in all relevant areas and the award of the Achievement Certificate is to be determined on this basis. Suggestions are made for giving more weight in the assessment of some areas—writing in particular; it is pointed out that progress should be gauged realistically and that 'whether marks be given from 1 to 10, A to E, or any other graded scale of assessment, is dependent on the teacher's concept of a satisfactory form of evaluation'.[19] It is also pointed out that marks should be accompanied by an oral or written comment of such a kind that it can be perceived by both teacher and student as constructive. Hence, all marks may be withheld from the students in order to give comments their proper emphasis. It is suggested that one useful way of reporting to parents is through interim progress reports on a terminal basis.

The Second Year Teachers Guide provides suggestions which deal more precisely with the assessment of the individual student. 'The Board of Secondary Education will require from the school at the end of the year a recommendation of level and grade (credit/pass) for each student'.[20] All such advice emphasises the fact that assessment should cover the full range of significant English activities. However the proportion of the total assessment given for work in a particular area should reflect the teacher's judgement of the significance of that area of English. Nor should assessment be confined to aspects of work which lend themselves to more precise measurement.

A new Leaving English syllabus was implemented in 1969. The examination in Leaving English Expression taken at the end of a two-year course consists of two papers. The first includes questions on comprehension and critical analysis and composition work, while the second is 'an objective test covering vocabulary, usage and comprehension, including some exercises in clear thinking and literary discrimination'.[21] The format of the examination is fairly traditional and seems to be in keeping with other public examinations in English at this level. But the Leaving examination is not a test of specific textual knowledge and teachers are encouraged to use their initiative in constructing courses within the general framework of the syllabus. Leaving English Literature is also a two-year course of study designed to develop in students 'an appreciation of major literary forms in

English'. Both the course and examination reflect academically-based, university English courses.

Whether the aims of these courses are realised or not depends very much on the calibre of the teachers themselves and the quality of their initial training.

6.6 SUMMARY

The demise of the Junior Certificate examination and the introduction of Achievement Certificate programs at the junior secondary level in this State has allowed teachers the freedom to develop individual courses and evaluation programs based on continuous and cumulative assessment. Although public examinations at the senior secondary level seem unlikely to be replaced at the moment, syllabuses do offer some flexibility within which teachers may move. One result of this is that teachers and other educators are currently discussing the possibility of extending Achievement Certificate courses into the upper forms of the secondary school.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. *Ibid,* p. 1.
3. *Ibid,* p. 1.
4. W.A. Education Department *Achievement Certificate Course: Second year English, teachers' guide.* Rev. ed., 1971, p. 5.
5. *Ibid,* p. 4.
6. The University of Western Australia Manual of Public Examinations, 1971, p. 119.
7. *Ibid,* p. 123.
8. *Ibid,* p. 123.
9. *Achievement Certificate Course: First Year English. Op. cit.* Introduction [ii].
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14. Quoted by BENNETT, B. H. AND HAY, J. A. in *Directions in Australian Secondary School English.* Longman Australia Pty. Ltd., 1971, p. 37.
15. *The Teaching of English in Western Australian Schools.* A submission by the Education Department of Western Australia to the Unesco Seminar in Sydney, May 29 to June 2, 1972.
16. *Statement on Changes and Methodological Innovations. New Materials and Texts in Western Australia Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education.* A submission by the English Teachers' Association of Western Australia to the Unesco Seminar in Sydney, May 29 to June 2, 1972, p. 4.
17. Manual of Public Examinations. *Op cit,* p. 119.
18. Achievement Certificate Course. First year English. *Op cit,* p. 17.
19. *Ibid,* p. 78.
20. Achievement Certificate Course. Second year English. *Op cit,* p. 43.
21. Manual of Public Examinations. *Op cit,* p. 129.

G South Australia

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Secondary English Curriculum Committee is responsible for syllabuses and other advisory material prepared for all secondary English courses under the auspices of the Education Department. These courses comprise the Junior Secondary curriculum studied during first, second and third years; the High Schools Alternative Course, a fourth year course for students not taking academic courses

and its fifth year counterpart for those who continue at school but do not wish to matriculate.

The Public Examinations Board of the University of South Australia is responsible for the external Leaving and Matriculation examination syllabuses taken at the end of fourth and fifth years, respectively.

The following summary relies on the documents listed below:

Education Department. Syllabus Advisory Notes, 1971: *English: Junior Secondary Curriculum, first, second and third years.*

Education Department: *A Handbook for Junior Secondary English, 1971.*

For the Listener: Junior Secondary English. Recorded information about teaching English.

Education Department: *High Schools Alternative Course.* English Fourth Year.

Education Department: *Fifth Year English.*

The Public Examinations Board of South Australia: *Syllabuses for 1972. Leaving and Matriculation Examinations.*

7.2 STATED AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central concern of English teaching in South Australia is the provision of:

> A balanced experience (which) will ensure continuing personal and social development with a growing command of the language and a broadening appreciation of the forms in which it is used.[1]

In order that the student may grow and mature, various needs of the child are seen to be of paramount importance. Eight such fundamental needs are suggested:

- The need to feel accepted as an individual.
- The need for effective communication with other people.
- The need to be concerned for and involved in his social environment.
- The need to express himself freely, confidently and frankly.
- The need to make evaluations and responsible decisions in areas of concern to him.
- The need to recognise and appreciate emotional responses.
- The need to play.
- The need to be left alone,[2]

Quite consistently, 'the broad aim of the syllabus is to encourage the intellectual, emotional and social development of the student'[3] through varied experiences, self expression, the development of appropriate behavioural skills, and the willingness to evaluate experience, including his own actions.

More specific objectives are categorised and discussed under headings which are derived from this statement:

1. *Experience*

(1) To have contact with a wide variety of reading, film, theatre, television, radio programs and all that widens his intellectual and emotional experience in a wholesome way.

(2) To develop sensitivity and discrimination by contact with poetry, prose, drama, film, television and radio.

(3) To use language to understand and clarify his experience.
(4) To develop awareness of other people and sensitivity of response to them.

2. *Expression*

(1) To express himself through talking.
(2) To express himself through dramatic activity.
(3) To express himself through the writing of prose and poetry.
(4) To express himself through activities that make use of music and other art forms as well as language and movement.

3. *Behaviour*

(1) To speak confidently and coherently.
(2) To listen (and view) with attention and discrimination.
(3) To read widely and perceptively.
(4) To write effectively in a wide range of forms.

4. *Evaluation*

(1) To evaluate his own success in learning.
(2) To clarify his own values and to evaluate experience accordingly.[4]

The High Schools Alternative Course, taken in fourth year, aims 'to study the mother tongue for personal development and enrichment, for the widening of social and human understanding and for practical needs of communication'.[5]

Implicit in the general statement of aims and objectives is the development of the following skills and abilities:

(1) Reading for understanding and enjoyment.
(2) Comprehension of what is spoken, read and seen.
(3) Fluency and clarity, conciseness and correctness in written and oral expression.
(4) Discrimination in the use and meaning of words for clarity and precision of expression.
(5) Ability to think clearly and logically.
(6) Ability to form sound judgments.[6]

The Fifth Year English course is intended for students who do not wish to matriculate, and aims to extend students personally and intellectually. As far as core studies are concerned, the aims of this course are:

- to expand the student's cultural background and to allow him to pursue a topic in depth through critical study of the differing view points of several writers;
- to extend and exercise powers of comprehension;
- to provide opportunities, through reading, writing and speaking, to criticise skilfully and fairly broad features of controversy arising in the course of experience;
- to learn and exercise the skills of logical expression and the art of informal and formal argument;
- to develop and exercise specific language skills.[7]

Specific aims and objectives for each of the electives offered in the course are also noted.

The P.E.B. syllabus for Leaving aims to develop and assess:

> a candidate's ability to write appropriate and acceptable English in a variety of situations; to assess his ability to understand the content of a wide range of writing in all common forms and to relate it to his own experience; to assess the candidate's knowledge of the growth of English, its usage and vocabulary, and some awareness of elementary semantics.[8]

The P.E.B. Matriculation English syllabus aims 'to focus attention on the three inter-related areas' of composition, comprehension and the study of literature, and to develop certain skills within each of these spheres. In composition, the emphasis is on developing a style of written expression 'suited to particular occasions and purposes'. Comprehension exercises aim at developing the ability to 'follow and comment' on arguments. The study of literature aims at 'developing skills in the close reading of texts in each of the three major genres'.[9]

7.3 STRUCTURE AND ORIENTATION OF COURSES

Over the last ten years, the once exclusively academic courses in the secondary schools of South Australia have been replaced by courses which, at least in all Government schools, are organised in 'tracks'.* The most rigorous, 'O' track, caters for students who aim to matriculate by sitting for the P.E.B. Matriculation Examination. The '1' track usually terminates with a Fourth Year internal or P.E.B. Leaving examination. There are some exceptions, however; some schools run Fifth Year '1' track courses. The '2' track, which is designed as a 'non-academic' course, terminates at the end of fourth year and is not examined externally. It is important to note that students are assigned to 'tracks' on the basis of their intentions for further study rather than on the basic ability. Moreover, throughout the secondary school, English is seen to be an integrated course which pursues essentially the same aims and approaches at varying levels. There are no prescriptive handbooks or courses and the syllabuses provided allow freedom to suit particular circumstances. Despite the fact that, since 1968, English has not been a compulsory subject for the two P.E.B. examinations, in practice all students are required to study English, although not necessarily in externally examined courses.

The syllabus is based on the concept that 'English is a unity' and as such its various aspects are seen as parts of an integrated whole contributing to the experiences of the student. 'Language (is seen to be the unifying factor) as it informs speaking, listening, reading and writing'.[10] It is regarded as a force for ordering one's unique experiences and for assimilating new ones. The syllabus adopts an experience-based approach, where 'learning experiences begin with the everyday experience of the student'.[11] It is stressed, however, that these learning experiences should be structured to bring about a mastery of skills and a progression to more mature experiences in reading, and writing. The South Australian Education Department warns that, although the approach to English teaching has changed to permit greater freedom, students still need to learn:

(1) how to organise and develop their ideas and how to construct sentences and paragraphs;

(2) how to increase their technical mastery over the mechanics of language; and

(3) to be guided from simple traditional books towards enjoyment of more complex literary works,[12]

* The standard 'tracks' are O, 1 and 2 but the 'track' notion has also been extended to include special tracks for students with problems requiring remediation.

While reiterating the central place of literature in the English course, the syllabus recognises the importance of theatre and mass media study in the English curriculum. Together with the syllabus, the Education Department has also published a series of notes for the advice of teachers. It is emphasised that they constitute a pool of ideas from which the individual teacher may make selections. Their function is seen to be that of helping the teacher to develop his own methods. A handbook for junior secondary English was published by the Education Department in 1971. It comprises a collection of practice lessons collated from various Adelaide schools and is accompanied by a 7 in. audio-tape. These studies in modern classroom practice all stress a child-centred, experienced-based approach.

The suggested outline for the High Schools Alternative Course encourages schools to pursue their own courses. The course outline offers a large number of suggestions from which it is expected teachers will make their own selection and determine relative emphases according to their respective students' needs. A variety of reading, writing, speaking and listening activities are suggested in accordance with the overall aim of personal development and individual enrichment, and the need for wider 'social and human understanding and for practical needs of communication'.[13] This course represents current thinking about a course for non-Matriculants at fourth year level.

A Fifth Year course is provided for those who do not wish to matriculate and is concerned more with a practical approach than with an academic one. The outstanding features of the course are comprehension, discrimination, clear thinking, critical acuity and the exercise of specific language skills. The course consists of a core, based on the theme of communication, and four elective aspects of English. The core consists of activities such as 'reading, comprehension, clear thinking and discrimination, and development and exercise of the skills of writing and speaking'[14] —all designed to foster more effective communication. The electives are based on drama, film study, journalism, speaking in public, and wide reading.

The P.E.B. syllabus for Leaving is primarily 'designed as a terminal examination for students completing four years of secondary English studies'. It 'sets out to examine language skills, rather than specific factual knowledge of particular texts'.[15] A list of recommended texts is provided, intended only to indicate some of the many resources appropriate for Leaving English. The course is set out in separate sections for drama, poetry, the novel, wider reading, language and written expression. Although the syllabus for the P.E.B. Matriculation Examination in English is designed to focus attention on the three inter-related areas of composition, comprehension, and the study of literature, it tends to be primarily a literature course.

7.4 CURRENT APPROACHES AND MATERIALS

Methods recommended for teaching English in this state are based upon the assumptions that the child is the point from which activity is generated, and that English ought to be regarded as a unity. Hence an integrated approach to the subject, such as the thematic approach, or the planning of programs over an extended period, is preferred to an approach which fragments the subject. Scope for 'flexibility in the use of time, space and grouping'[16] are taken into account. Places other than the classroom (library, drama room) are stressed as being important for student activity. A wide range of student involvement is implied, together with an increased use of diverse stimulus material; hence there is also special emphasis on allowing and expecting flexibility in response mode. As a consequence:

> teaching practices are becoming increasingly adventurous and exciting. Drama is regarded and used as an integral part of classroom activity. Traditional divisions ('prose', 'poetry', etc) are rapidly disappearing as small groups and individuals follow their own paths stimulated by a variety of sources. Varied activities occur at the same time within the same 'class'. Much fruitful work is done outside direct supervision. Theme studies, team teaching and individual tutoring are increasingly observed.[17]

This is not to say, however, that there are not teachers 'who tend to fall back on the memory of their own schooling'[18] and that all teachers are in accord with the spirit of the new syllabus. But much is being achieved by the Secondary Advisory Curriculum Committee to stimulate activity which is purposeful, which creates student interest and which recognises a wide range of needs in the classroom.

7.5 CURRENT METHODS AND ASSESSMENT

Methods of evaluation in South Australia are consistent with the student-centred approach, recommended by the syllabus. The syllabus for the junior secondary school, advises 'continuing assessment as being the most reliable measure of student achievement'.[19] As the aims indicate (*vide* 7.2) the syllabus seeks to provide a wide range of experiences and thus the need to test for a wide range of skills and activities arises. The effectiveness of activities should be evaluated as often as the need arises, and it is advised that:

> the overall assessment grade should include some recognition and assessment of skills and abilities in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This is seen to be accomplished by:
>
> (a) assessing project work which includes all such activities.
>
> (b) individual testing over a period of time of the students' performance in each area.[20]

The notes give teachers guidance and information about how and what to test. For example, the use of diagnostic testing during the first year is seen to be helpful in aiding to discover the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Without placing too much reliance on such tests, a place is seen for the employment of:

> appropriate standardised tests of specific language skills throughout a whole year, group or track, as a means to further diagnosis, and as a check on individual development.[21]

The High Schools Alternative Course stresses that many aspects of student development sought in the course can only be gauged subjectively by the teacher. Two broad forms of assessment expressed in marks or grades are employed:

(1) continuous written and oral assessment throughout the year, to contribute to the final grade awarded;

(2) examinations to be set and marked within the school, with some moderation of final examination papers and standards of marking.[22]

The year's work is given twice the weight of the final examination, and 'Spoken English' carries one quarter of the mark of both the continuous and final assessment. Thus, in line with the fundamental aims of the course, 'schools are urged to develop their own approaches and emphases relative to both continuous assessment and the examination'.[23]

In Fifth Year English, since emphasis is to be on:

> development of the student's attitude to himself, to the subject, to the school and society, (rather) than with imparting a prescribed body of knowledge,[24]

the imposing of a formal examination at the end of the year is seen to be inappropriate. Rather, it is recommended that:

> at the end of the year, each student be awarded a grade of A, B, C, D, or E for each aspect of his work in English. This grading is to be decided after careful observation of the student's attainments and progress throughout the year.[25]
>
> During the year, regular oral and written assessment is to be made of a student's progress in comprehension, reading, speaking and writing.[26]
>
> At the end of October, each student (is to) submit a folder of work representative of the year's activities in written English. The folder may contain say, fifteen items, ranging from comprehension and clear thinking exercises, to letters, reports, summaries and examples of any written work done in electives.[27]

A final assignment is to be set in November, so as to:

> assist the teacher in finalising his assessments and to allow the student to feel he has proved himself.[28]

Elective activities are not to be formally tested but a regular record of the student's ability, level of attainment and attitude is to be kept by the teacher.

> A final grade of A, B, C, D, or E will be awarded for each aspect of the course after a review of the year's work.[29]

The 1972 P.E.B. *Syllabus for Leaving Certificate* will include an examination consisting of two papers. The first paper will comprise a number of written tests of various lengths which may include questions on drama and novels listed in the syllabus. There may also be exercises to test written English, which might include letters, telegrams, accounts, descriptions and other forms of prose writing. The emphasis in this paper is on content, and on accurate and acceptable English. The second paper is likely to include a series of tests developed to test comprehension of and response to unseen material; this may include prose, verse, and drama. The P.E.B. Matriculation Examination consists of two papers, the first including questions on the prescribed texts, and the second, questions on composition and English usage.

7.6 SUMMARY

The new syllabus documents of the Secondary Advisory Curriculum Committee in English and of the Public Examinations Board, respectively, reflect clearly the significance of the assumption that the child is the focal point of the educational process in which he participates. Current changes in courses, in methodology and in resources used, in the institution of schemes of wide reading and continuous assessment, in 'a growing concern for developing techniques of motivation for all English activities'[30] all reflect the climate of thought and innovation in South Australia.

In the final analysis, however, the extent to which the impressive innovation apparent in the curriculum documents becomes entrenched in teaching practice, depends on those concerned with the teaching process itself.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Education Department. Syllabus. Advisory Notes, 1971: *English: Junior Secondary Curriculum first, second and third years*, p. 4.
2. *Ibid*, p. 1.
3. *Ibid*, p. 1.
4. *Ibid*, p. 2.
5. Education Department. *High Schools Alternative Course*. English. Fourth Year, p. 1.

6. *Ibid*, p. 2.
7. Education Department. *Fifth Year English*, pp. 1-2.
8. The Public Examinations Board of South Australia. *Syllabuses for 1972. Leaving and Matriculation Examinations*. p. 7.
9. *Ibid*, p. 84.
10. Syllabus. Advisory Notes, 1971: *English Junior Secondary Curriculum. Op cit*, p. 3.
11. *Ibid*, p. 3.
12. *Ibid*, p. 4.
13. High Schools Alternative Course. English Fourth Year. *Op cit*, p. 1.
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17. A paper submitted by the English Teachers' Association of South Australia to the Unesco Seminar in Sydney, May 29 to June 2, 1972, p. 1.
18. *Ibid*, p. 2.
19. Syllabus Advisory Notes, 1971: *English Junior Secondary Curriculum. Op cit*. p. 4.
20. *Ibid*, p. 57.
21. *Ibid*, p. 58.
22. *High Schools Alternative Course*. English Fourth Year. *Op cit*, p. 4.
23. *Ibid*, p. 4.
24. Fifth Year English. *Op cit*, p. 7.
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27. *Ibid*, p. 8.
28. loc. cit.
29. loc cit.
30. Boomer, Garth. 'A Description of English Teaching in South Australia' in *English in Australia*, No. 13, June 1970, p. 21.